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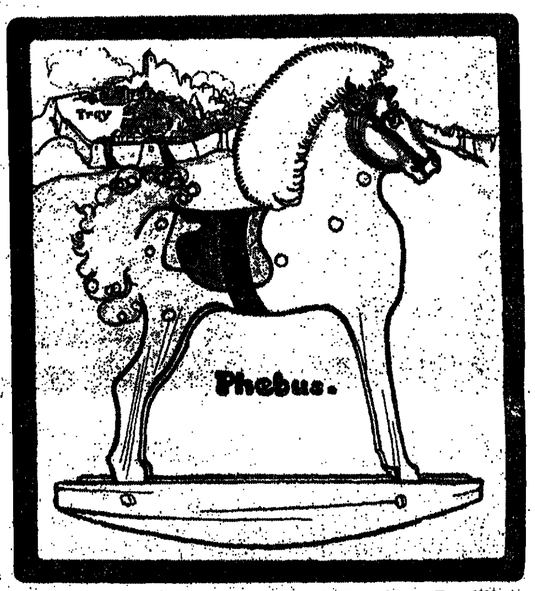
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CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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The Jacobin novel, by Raymond Williams

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GARY KELLY:
The English Jacobin Novel
291pp. Oxford University Press. £10.

Between the early 1770s and the late 1830s there is an apparent absence of definition in the development of the English novel. Most maps of the period show little more than the isolated peaks of Jane Austen and Walter Scott and the similarly isolated but smaller features of Fanny Burney, Maria Edgeworth and Thomas Love Peacock. This contrasts sharply with the preceding and succeeding periods, in which the outlines of what is at once a generation and a form can be quite confidently drawn. The question which then arises is whether this contrast is a matter of the terrain or of the cartography. For the literary historian the problem is often masked by the fact that the period which is so ill defined in the novel is so well defined in poetry: the two Romantic generations and their original, influential forms. For the cultural historian the problem is more difficult, not only because this is a period of major social and cultural change—indeed in the Industrial Revolution and in the struggle for parliamentary democracy one of the two most significant in all modern English history—but also because, in spite of the maps, this is a period of remarkable expansion in the novel, notably from the 1780s: an expansion which it is too easy to dismiss as merely quantitative.

On some of the most recent maps a particular contour has been influentially traced: the Gothic novel, which has experienced a significant rise in popularity. It is an authentic feature, from *The Castle of Otranto* through *The Mysteries of Udolpho* to *The Monk*. The difficulty comes when its defining elements, of the supernatural and of terror, are used to override or assimilate novels of a quite different kind, for example Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. This happens either when the Gothic novel is treated as simply a literary fashion, or when it is seen, as André Breton argued, as a pathological symptom of "the social turmoils which agitated the whole of Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century". For it is an ignorant reduction of the cultural responses of this period, and specifically of these responses in English novels, to suppose that widespread conflict and terror produced no more than their displaced symptoms, or no more than an emotional disturbance which was assuaged by exercises in sensation. On the contrary we have to recognize an at least equally significant development in which the conflict and the terror were, in specific ways, directly confronted and an attempt made to follow them through to their social causes. Gary Kelly's hypothesis of the "English Jacobin novel" is an important contribution to this necessary recognition and redress.

The term "Jacobin", as he begins by recognizing, has its difficulties. Indeed they are more severe than even he allows. John Thelwall noted that the title "Jacobin" was "fixed upon [illegible] stigma, by our enemies", and the parallel with some modern uses of "Communist" or "Bolshevik" or "Marxist" is quite close. Prejudice both against the French Revolution itself, and against the years of revolutionary terror, was quite consciously invoked. Yet the English novelists in question, though all friends of the French Revolution, were based in a native formation which politically and philosophically preceded 1789. The nearest things to terror which occurred in England were the "Church and King" riot which destroyed Priestley's laboratory and manuscripts, the prosecution of *The Rights of Man*, the State Trials of 1793 and 1794, the suspension of Habeas Corpus and the "Twin Acts" against "treasonable practices" and "seditious meetings" [illegible] liberties of opinion and association. This conscious repression had direct effects on the novelists, and in the case of the most remarkable novel of the period—William Godwin's *Things As They Are*—a literary effect of the most significant and interesting kind.

Mr Kelly's selection of novelists can be questioned. He concentrates on four: Robert Bage, Elizabeth Inchbald, Thomas Holcroft and Godwin. All four are relevant, but it is difficult to sustain a case for excluding Charlotte Smith, especially in *Desmond* (1792), Mary Hays, in *Emma Courtney* (1796), and Mary Wollstonecraft, in the unfinished and posthumously published *The Wrongs of Woman* (1798). Each of these is more overtly radical than most of the other novels selected, and *Desmond*, including reports of the revolution in France, is nearer any reasonable association with Jacobinism in its strict sense. Indeed, by selection and exclusion, Mr Kelly weakens one element of his hypothesis, while at the same time, in a different direction, strengthening it. What is seen as common to Bage, Inchbald, Holcroft and Godwin is, if a French analogy is required, and as he himself points out, more Girondin than Jacobin, but more than either it is a specific complex within an English tradition of social dissent and humanitarian reform. This is especially evident in Bage and in the early novels of Inchbald and Holcroft. It is then at its most significant in its collision and interaction with the revolutionary events in France and with the English repression which sought, arbitrarily, to prevent revolution and to destroy reform in a single blackening campaign.

The central tenets of this position were, first, that characters are formed by circumstances, education and training and, second, that candid explanation, rational inquiry and consequent reform can overcome [illegible] not vices but errors. It is easy to see how this position relates to the spirit of the Enlightenment, and how it provided a confident basis for schemes of social and moral reform. What has not been so easy to see is that the position also provided a basis for a new kind of integration in the form of the novel.

The most significant achievement of Mr Kelly's book is his discussion and demonstration of this important development, which has more bearing on the subsequent development of the nineteenth-century novel than has been at all commonly argued. At one level he makes a convincing case, and the strongest examples seem to be Bage's *Man As He Is* (1792), Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791) and Holcroft's *Anna St Ives* (1792). Yet, while the changes are evident, the integration provided by these versions of cause, consequence and change is still, in general, of the material of personal relationships in the tradition of Richardson. Two problems stood in the way of the next stage of development: first, that corruption, while of course neither metaphysical nor innate, might prove, by the extension of rational inquiry, to be systematic; and, second, that if it were systematic it might resist or even overwhelm the most candid and rational attempts to reform it. The first problem bore more directly on the actual composition of [illegible] typically virtuous or vicious character, with his appropriate circumstances and education, could already be written, by known means. The whole moral and secular tradition of individual characterization supported it, and to our own day has not lost its hold, being used again and again even to define what the novel can or must do.

To see the matter otherwise, beginning from general circumstances—a condition of society—and seeing characters as produced and reproduced within them, is not only a break from tradition; it is an immediate break from method, and poses the most serious problems of actual writing if the general condition is to be substantially (rather than summarily) present and if it is to be seen as not merely circumstantial but formative. [illegible] of these novelists, Holcroft and notably Godwin, and also, in one intense case, Mary Wollstonecraft, made serious attempts to explore this new fictional world, and the *tendency* can indeed be generally observed. The deliberately generalizing titles—*Man As He Is*, *Things As They Are*, *Nature and Art*, *The Wrongs of Woman*—confirm the attempt. Meanwhile, however, the second problem, that systematic corruption might not only resist but overwhelm its candid and rational would-be reformers, was being directly experienced, not in the search for new fictional forms, but in mounting prosecution and repression. To write a novel with such a theme, even without direct reference (which was usually anxiously avoided) to the cleansing of corruption by the revolution in France, was indeed to risk your liberty, in the crucial years between 1791 and 1798. It is hardly surprising that the search for new forms, in itself so difficult yet already so clear a tendency, was confused, dispersed and in effect, within that tradition, halted.

But there remains one cardinal case: the best novel and, if we can read it, the best record of that time: Godwin's *Things As They Are*, the original title which Mr Kelly convincingly prefers to the original subtitle which is now so much better known: *The Adventures of Caleb Williams*. Indeed the change of emphasis in the title (made by Godwin in 1831) is part of the history, including Godwin's subsequent history: a change from the attempted embodiment of a systematic corruption to the individualized history of what can be seen either as a singular adventure or as a psychological case. Mr Kelly has many useful things to say about the novel and he provides us with much valuable information. But since in general I disagree with his reading I would like, in response to the stimulus of his work, to sketch an alternative account and to connect it with his more general themes.

Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, published in 1793, is a landmark in the tradition of philosophical reform which we have seen as underlying the new novels of the 1790s. As soon as it was published, and so widely recognized and acclaimed (though it was also proposed, in Parliament, that it should be prosecuted), he turned again to fiction, being "now unwilling to stoop to what was insignificant". He wanted to write a novel not "for temporary effect" but to be "incorporated with the very fibres of the soul". By his own later account, and most significantly in terms of the philosophical tradition and political situation already discussed, he began with the powerful image of a man pursued and hunted down, and then worked back from this to devise circumstances which would provoke the pursuit. This is, I believe, a genuine mutation in the doctrine that characters are formed by circumstances: not in the simple sense of denial, for the circumstances are studiedly reconstructed and the original doctrine is in this sense still apparent, but in the more complex sense of a sentence from his original preface: "it is now known to philosophers that the spirit and character of the government intrudes itself into every rank of society". What we then have is not, or not only, a world of moral conflict in which vice and benevolence, or reason and ignorance, contend. What is newly present is the sense of a system—political but then also inevitably moral—which, as "government", *intrudes itself*. This is not only the recognition of [illegible] pressures which in fact led him to suppress the preface in the first edition, because, as he put it later, "terror was the order of the day; and it was feared that even the humble novelist might be shown to be constructively a traitor".

It is also, as I understand it, a deeper recognition, of what we might now call hegemony; or, in Godwin's terms, not merely the formation but the corruption of character by a systematic political order. And the point of this recognition, in terms of fictional [illegible] transition from the "circumstanced character"—is, first, a version of social relations as dependence, pressure and pursuit, and second, a transcendence of moral contrast by a new process in which both hunter and hunted, persecutor and persecuted, are dynamically though of course differentially formed and impelled by a general condition which is common to both. Thus, on an immediately preceding model, Godwin could have made Falkland, the pursuer, vicious by upbringing and circumstance, and Caleb, the pursued, contrastingly virtuous. In fact this contrast is limited to the initial situation, in the conflict between the noble Falkland and the vicious Tyrrel. When Falkland murders Tyrrel and not only denies his crime but lets an honest man be executed for it he moves into a connecting relationship with his secretary Caleb who by rational inquiry, which can also be called "curiosity", discovers the crime and is then pressured, slandered and at last hunted down to prevent his disclosure of it. This is an action which has gone beyond "circumstances"; it is at once a dynamic and a reciprocal conflict, or, as Godwin eventually saw it, a mutual corruption, within pressures which come through as terrifying just because they are so general, so "intruding" and so pervasive.

The intuitive depth and the imaginative power which Godwin brought to this recognition have been sufficiently recognized, by generations of readers. But there remain two problems in analysis. First, the novel has been reduced, often plausibly, to the different concept of "psychological realism", which is of course fully present but which is altered if it is construed within a timeless, ungrounded "Psychology". The novel has been interpreted, within a dominant tendency, in a range from a study of neurosis to an allegory of Godwin's neurosis. The pressures of a time and a condition, which Godwin repeatedly invokes—at every level from Tyrrel's arrogant landlordism to Captain Raymond's rebel outlaws—are then seen as mere projections or indeed as "circumstances". Within this fashion, even the radical politics of the 1790s are seen as a neurosis. But the case is important precisely because Godwin seeks to show not so much the interaction of those abstracted entities, "the individual" and "society", as their integration at a depth which fuses the deepest personal fears and impulses and the most pressing general forms of domination and injustice. It is in this sense that *Things As They Are* is an indispensable novel of a major English tradition, one that is clearest in Hardy.

Yet within this achievement there is a specific and significant problem: that of the novel's alternative endings. This is a case comparable in general importance, as a matter of imaginative consciousness in process, with Elizabeth Gaskell's alteration of *John Barton* to *Mary Barton*, and the evidence, in Godwin's case, happens to be more direct and accessible, though still difficult to read. Godwin began the novel in February 1793. From January 1794, with the writing well advanced, he began visiting Joseph Gerrald, who had been convicted of sedition (he had proposed universal suffrage and annual parliaments). It was an intensely observed case. Coleridge wrote of Gerrald, in terms that irresistibly remind us of *Things As They Are*:

> Withering in the sickly and tainted gales of a prison, his healthful soul looks down from the citadel of his integrity on his impotent persecutors.

On April 29, 1794, Godwin took leave of Gerrald in Newgate. On the following day he finished his novel. Caleb's last attempt to establish the truth of Falkland's crime is dismissed by the magistrates; his mind breaks under the strain of this final rejection of his integrity. Then, on May 4, Godwin wrote the conclusion again, in the form that was eventually published. Caleb accuses Falkland, while also accusing himself of a shameless pertinacity. Falkland, moved by the appeal, confesses and shortly dies. Caleb finds himself also guilty, "in the corrupt wilderness of human society" which has poisoned them both.

It is possible to prefer one ending or the other; most readers who have known of both have preferred the second. But the real significance, it seems to me, is that both endings were written; that both, in that sense, were possible. Nor was this an abstracted process; the figure of Joseph Gerrald was obviously close at hand. What Coleridge had said of Gerrald was true, but it did not save him; he was transported and died, in his early thirties. It is then possible to feel angry at a contrived fictional ending, in which earnest moral appeal, aided by self-accusation of rashness and thoughtlessness, persuades a guilty criminal to confession and reform. Godwin's own much later reference to Gerrald, reading the published novel in prison, staying awake to finish it quickly when it had cost the author so much more time to write, but then crying, refreshed, "Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new", is indeed almost incredibly insensitive and offensive. The confession of guilt in an inquiry for the truth is also, for the date, convenient.

But there is a sentence in the first ending which is, imaginatively, crucial. "Alas! Alas! it too plainly appears in my history that persecution and tyranny can never die." And then what, at this date, was the real lesson of Gerrald? It is strictly an unanswerable question: in the systematic hardness of a tyranny which denied his integrity and destroyed him, and which would go on destroying others; in the moral example of a courageous resister, who thus reaches beyond himself. At the time of writing, and in our own time, the latter might seem the truer answer, but what is significant is that Godwin, after writing the first ending to agree with the first answer, did not change it to agree with the second. He changed it, accepting defeat in a more profound sense, to a bitter recognition of mutual destruction, within an overpowering general condition: persecutor and persecuted destroyed together, but with the whole truth told, to be fully understood.

It is a tragic if temporary, even provisional ending to the fiction of reform.

For more on William Godwin, see page 371.

Between behaviour and belief

By Mary Jacobus

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT:
Mary, A Fiction and The Wrongs of Woman
Edited by Gary Kelly
231pp. Oxford University Press. £5.75.

The gulf between Mary Wollstonecraft's turbulent life and her rationalist stance in *The Rights of Woman*—once used to discredit her feminism—now seems a source of compelling interest. Woman and feminist remain at once conflicted and inseparable; the emotional outcry of her letters ("I am often with myself at war") insists on the subjectivity of an oppression elsewhere formulated in intellectual terms, witnessing to painful fissures between behaviour and belief in a woman who could throw off convention but not the very conditioning she complained of. Advocating rational friendship between men and women, she knew herself compelled by the need to love and be loved; attacking Rousseau's ideal of woman as child, she could also confess to Godwin, "I perceive that I shall be a child to the end of the chapter".

The letters (like the biographies) tend to turn Mary Wollstonecraft into the heroine of her own novel. The two she actually wrote, *Mary, A Fiction* and *The Wrongs of Woman: or, Maria*, have now been edited in the Oxford English Novels series with an excellent introduction and informative notes by Gary Kelly. Their interest lies not only in their autobiographical urgency, but in the very differing degrees to which they articulate the conflict within her. Separated by a crucial decade, they span the French Revolution, *The Rights of Woman*, the love affair with Imlay, and the birth of her daughter. The change is partly from naive self-dramatization to personal and political insight. *Mary*, written in 1787 while its author was a governess in an aristocratic Irish family, reads like the retributive attempt of a denied and devalued sensibility to win recognition—"the soul of the author is exhibited", the Advertisement announces, rather as Jane Eyre exhibits to Rochester the visionary landscapes which attest to her hidden capacity for Romantic experience. But the comparison ends there. At this stage both Mary Wollstonecraft's technique and her ideology were too limited to subsume autobiography and fantasy into fiction.

Gary Kelly suggests that *Mary* belongs to the Rousseauist tradition of confession practised as a quest for self-awareness. But while its writing may have proved liberating for Mary Wollstonecraft, the novel itself is memorable chiefly for its unconscious revelations. Mary (like her creator) is a neglected female child who invents a compensatory self given to solitude, good works, and enthusiastic devotional sentiment. With Maggie Tulliver, she complains: "Am I an exception to the general rule? have I desires implanted in me only to make me miserable? will they never be gratified? shall I never be happy?" But the tyrant here is less provincial society than her own melancholy and self-punishing sensibility. Her arranged marriage fills her with aversion, and she loves instead a consumptive friend, then an ugly violin-playing invalid; both die in her arms, leaving her to anticipate a world "*where there is neither marrying*, nor giving in marriage"—death, that is, rather than the abolition of the marriage laws.

The Wrongs of Woman, by contrast, is motivated by "the desire of exhibiting the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society". But by now Mary Wollstonecraft not only understands what society does to women; she understands what women do to themselves. The novel's central proposition—"Was not the world a vast prison, and women born slaves?"—goes beyond the protest of *The Rights of Woman* to explore its heroine's enslavement by her own emotional needs. The trappings of the gothic novel (ruins, imprisonment, madness) are deployed to show the re-enforcement of oppressive laws and customs by female sensibility itself. Transcending polemic, Mary Wollstonecraft creates a bleak fictional statement which may draw on the events of her own life (her desertion by Imlay and her suicide attempt) but becomes a history "rather to be considered, as of woman, than of an individual".

The Wrongs of Woman opens with its heroine incarcerated in a madhouse, a "mansion of despair", peopled by "terrific inhabitants" whose petrified forms haunt her dreams, their groans and shrieks externalizing her state of mind. Her keeper is a working-class woman whose narrative extends the theme of emotional deprivation and injustice to illegitimacy, seduction and prostitution. Maria's own story, designed for her infant daughter, is told in flashback, making the novel importantly subjective in form; only in retrospect do we understand (as we understand ourselves) how Maria came to make a bad marriage and why her flight ended in the madhouse. And as if by magic, she is released from her prison once she has confronted the past: "All that had passed during her confinement, appeared to be a dream."

But the melancholy thrust of the novel is to suggest how institutional shackles are replaced by others. Maria's imprisonment creates the ideal conditions for her to fall in love with a fellow inmate and admirer of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*: "A magic lamp now seemed to be suspended in Maria's prison, and fairy landscapes flitted round the gloomy walls ...". The rest of the novel survives only in outline, but it is clear that her lover's desertion and Maria's attempted suicide were to have elaborated a theme initiated in *Mary* ten years before: "I cannot live without loving—and love leads to madness." Like all good protest novels, *The Wrongs of Woman* culminates in a trial scene in which justice is travestied; answering Maria's indictment of the marriage laws, the judge's hostile summing-up provides an ironic context for Mary Wollstonecraft's own despairing and unanswerable question: "What virtuous woman thought of her feelings?"

To say that the two novels are moving in the last resort because they reveal so much about their author is not to belittle them. As Gary Kelly argues, they simultaneously confront the problem of sensibility and use that sensibility to mediate between experience and ideas; like Godwin, fictionalizing *Political Justice* in *Caleb Williams*, Mary Wollstonecraft turned to the Jacobin novel as a means of internalizing and extending the implications of an earlier political statement. The confluence of politics and imagination was ultimately to produce a greater novel than either in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Representative as it is of a period poised between revolution and reaction, reason and imagination, Mary Wollstonecraft's writing helps to inaugurate Romantic fiction. The special claim of these novels, for all the incompleteness of their achievement, is to have marked the meeting-point of feminism and the Romantic movement.

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Who Killed Cock Robin?—or rather "Wie schoot Roodbaardje Pik?" To which the answer, of course, is "Ik, zei de Mus/Met een pijl uit mijn hus". A Dutch translation of the nursery rhyme by the poet Judith Herzberg has just been published by Uitgeverij De Harmonie (Singel 390, Amsterdam) under the title Wie schoot Roodbaardje Pik? *with a series of drawings by Peter Vos brilliantly contrived to suggest the man beneath the skin (or fur, or feathers, or hide). In addition to Cock Robin himself and the homicidal Sparrow, the pictures reproduced alongside portray the grave-digging Ull and the Rook with his kleine hoek. Mr Vos's grand finale is a memorable pull-out panorama of "Alle vogels in de lucht" a-sighing and a-sobbing.*

The education of an American

By Julian Symons

KENNETH REXROTH:
An Autobiographical Novel
367pp. Whittet Books. £6.50 (paperback, £2.95).

Eight years ago I was walking across the University of California campus at Santa Barbara with my wife and Hugh Kenner when a wild-*haired figure wearing a vividly* checked shirt and an equally wild-ing jacket greeted me by name. "Kenneth Rexroth. We met in London, 1949", he said, and passed on. When I expressed surprise that this father figure of the Beats should be teaching there, Hugh Kenner said that he was an insurance policy against student discontent.

This instant recollection of a brief meeting twenty years before is an example of Mr Rexroth's remarkable memory. It makes one, or at least me, more ready than I would otherwise be to accept the detailed account of his first twenty-one years by a man who appears to have total recall of almost everything that has happened to him. It is easy to see why Kenneth Rexroth was regarded almost with reverence by a whole generation of West Coast poets, for he had accomplished in his youth their idea that all life is movement and that all movement should be free.

In those twenty-one years he had worked as pharmacy apprentice, soda-fountain jerk, fry cook and *counterman and huckster painter*—which means a painter of decorations on saloon mirrors. He had been "horse wrangler and cookee" to a pack outfit hauling building materials onto a site in the Rockies, and sheep-herder in the same area. He had been a street-corner orator preaching Anarchism, and had shipped out as mess steward across the Atlantic on "a filthy rust-bucket of one of the many Ellerman lines". He had done all sorts of jobs in theatres, from back-stage work, walk-ons and spear-carrying to "relief candy butcher" in burlesque houses. In New York he had lived at one time next door to Earl Browder and down the hall from another American communist who was to become famous, Mike *Gold. When he took a basement* apartment in Greenwich Village, Allen Tate and Hart Crane lived up above.

He had gone to prison for several months when "safe" was first invented, and had been married to an epileptic although it was the end not the one who had fainted at the altar. His wife had an Idealism so absolute that it verges, I should think, on what is called "mental illness", and their apartment in Chicago was a temporary home for "dissolute and unemployable party terminals, terminal alcoholics, thin-necked cranks, and plain ever-excessive incompetents". One might suppose that such a life left little room for art, but he had published a number of poems, most of them under pseudonyms, and had held his first exhibition of paintings. He is a poet and translator that he is now known, at least on the West Coast of America, as a painter.

Rexroth was born in 1905 to a German family that had been in America for more than a century. He was brought up in a pietistic tradition which, as he says, he absorbed as a matter of course.

> You were not only honest, forthright in speech and never used polite evasions or euphemisms. . . . You never gambled. Although my father was a constant gambler he presented this aspect of himself to me as a very bad example, a vice not to be imitated. You never overindulged in food or drink. You never hunted or wore furs. You never dressed in fashion, like undignified people . . . . This kind of training produces a banteur I know many people find offensive. It may be arrogance, but I prefer to think of it as an expression of the sense of responsibility . . . the ethic of free men growing up in a free country.

It is an ethic that very evidently lies behind the personality in this book.

His first ten years were spent in Indiana, after which the family moved to Chicago and then to Toledo. The elder Rexroth was at first sales manager in a prosperous pharmacy business, and later had a brief mysterious period of tremendous affluence, succeeded by financial disaster and modest recovery. He became a hard drinker as well as a gambler. Kenneth Rexroth's mother, a provincial charmer with dash and style, taught him reading, writing and drawing, and employed the younger daughter of the local French milliner to instruct him in French. When he first went to school at the age of eleven he was immediately advanced two grades because he was so far ahead of his companions. The memoirs of his parents, though less personal than the rest of the book, are among the best things in it. They were both dead by the time their son was thirteen. He went to live in Chicago with his aunt, and later a judge who was eventually governor of Illinois became his guardian. A little family *money came to him, and from the* age of sixteen he lived on his own in various apartments, doing various jobs, sleeping with various girls.

He carried on his education in public, in places like the Chicago salon of Jake Loeb, where twenty people were on hand every night at dinner, and where D. H. Lawrence, Bertrand Russell, G. K. Chesterton, Duse and other international celebrities called as they were passing through, to join dozens of Americans from the arts and professions who ranged from Clarence Darrow to Frank Lloyd Wright. It is a fine period touch that Dion O'Banion, the gangster who ran a florist's shop, provided flowers for the salon.

The figure who emerged from this stewpot of emotional and cultural self-education (an actual pot of stew or spaghetti was provided every night by the Loebs) was, again, very American: a tough-minded man strongly sceptical about accepted ideas and attitudes, an idealistic anarchist prepared to place personal freedom far above the idea of order, a believer in art as the noblest form in which such freedom could be expressed. A single reading of Lenin disgusted him: "It is hard to convey to a generation cascharderized to such behaviour the effect of Lenin's abuse, lies, and paranoid accusations on a young boy saturated with the lofty moral optimism of the pre-Bolshevik revolutionary movement."

He is open about his contempt for American prose fiction, calling Melville and Hawthorne absolute trash, and linking the "spiritually vulgar" Nietzsche with the "equally dreadful" Poe. His ideal prose writer is Defoe, his deepest emotional adherence to the idea that spiritual development comes through physical isolation and reflection. In a brief preface he says that "I who was once a troubled irregular peg in a complicated hole now find myself in agreement with Jesuit theologians and Broad Church bishops".

Some words of reservation are in order. The book has not been written but dictated, and it is not free of deplorable words like "totalized" and "situational", nor of clichés about "gracious and mellow people" or "one of the finest human beings I've met in my life". There is a maddening absence of dates, particularly irritating in passages which begin "that spring" or "that winter" without identifying the year.

There are occasions when one feels that at 17 Rexroth is speaking for the youthful one, as when he says that at the age of nineteen or twenty he had "begun to feel that unedited Wyatt was better than Surrey, and that Marsden [*sic*] was better than Beaumont and Fletcher". It may be true but is very surprising to be told that Wyndham Lewis had "a greater influence on Chicago painting in those years" (the very early 1920s) "than did the major Cubists and Expressionists", and when he adds that Lewis was "never a purely abstract painter" and that he used mostly a "color organization based on crimson and dark green" it seems that he can have seen little of Lewis's early work. There are other minor mistakes, and one feels that if dates had been given more might be evident. The title also is a little puzzling. Does it mean that passages in the book are deliberately invented? One would prefer not to think so.

When the words of reservation have been said, however, this remains a fine book, illuminating both about the author and the period in which he grew up. Kenneth Rexroth is a genial polymath (he has translated poetry in six languages) who is also a bohemian and a mystic, a scholar and at times a bit of a bum. It is not likely that he will ever be widely regarded in England as an important poet, but nobody could read this autobiography without feeling that he is an admirable man.

Out of town

By Geoffrey Grigson

EDWARD THOMAS:
Edward Thomas on the countryside
Edited by Roland Gant
183pp. Faber. £4.95.

"I now live—if living it may be called—by my writing: 'literature,' we call it in Fleet Street (derived from litter)." That was Edward Thomas on himself at twenty-two; and when a few years later he was churning out yet another prose pot-boiler (*Beautiful Wales*, in Black's Colour Book series) he wrote to Gordon Bottomley: "I have no time except for outlines and hurried phrases and cheap epithets."

How then are we to explain Edward Thomas, in life and in writing? His country pot-boilers are, on the whole, tedious. He knew they were tedious. Why was he afraid or incredulous of the possibility to think it amounts to that of being or becoming a poet, until Robert Frost turned up and shoved him through the obvious turnstile? "I wonder". he was to write to Frost in 1914, "whether you can imagine me taking to verse. If you can I might get over feeling it is impossible."

And while he had to earn, when period circumstances and constitution were against him. He became —his phrase—a writing animal at a time when freelance journalism, reviewing and pot-boiling for publishers were even more mingly paid than they have been in my life time." I am not in the least de-voted, except in quarters where modernism is wanted for worse reasons, to anything new, simply because it is new. I am not in the least interested in the 'open road' as a way of living, when his rich became pregnant. A wife, that fact, children, and all the while a melancholic, self-retreative, self-distrustful constitution. A writing animal and a most cultured man, without money, without connections, feeling himself pivoted between working class or lower middle class and the self-confident class of those writers who surrounded him; a writing animal without an ability or a desire to be ingratiating.

Nothing for it, then, but the peripatising books, the capitalization of his mainly solitary pleasures, the books that had to go on and on, without time to pause.

It is from these books, chiefly that Roland Gant has made a not very wise selection, which is less a search for the bright and indestructible in Edward Thomas than *a search for gems of what we designate, more or less* with contempt, as country writing or nature writing —that is to say, nostalgically tony writing about downs and fields and yellowhammers and sturdy labourers guiding their plough handles behind rippling haunches.

Without drama, without stay without structure, the writing rambles along. The curvaceousness of downs will be described over and over again, flowers will be named, no more, in triad after triad, "fern, bramble and foxglove", "bedstraw, the stern thistle and wizard henbane", larks occur and occur, when a single lark, thoroughly appreciended, is about enough for one writer's lifetime, and then, in what he called the "dead rhythm" of his prose, the words will flatten into mentioning a land that "owes much of its power to a mood of generous reverie which it bestows" or into saying that "sometimes under the pines a tumultus whispers a gentle thing, neither wind nor sea, robin, titmouse or nightingale, nor any bird, but like them all". All about the open road it is how Thomas dismissed this way of writing, this "Norfolk jacket style", which touched his profounder loves without presenting them.

Here then was a writer forced into an English disease, which still infects many, among them the editor of these excerpts. Only now and again do we come on a thrilling stab of that real thing which at last would inform the best of the poems. Roland Gaur includes an example in a passage from Thomas's "Oxford" (1903) in which the Arnold track around Cumnor and Bablock-Hythe, he writes of an orchard "where the grass is gloomy in April with the shadow of bright cherry flowers".

Roland Gant might have found a few more stabs of delight, but not all that many. Till his lucky association with Robert Frost, Edward Thomas could not break out of himself, or into himself. He could not lay his heart or his excitements bare, and damn opinion or consequences.

Ivor Gurney, a poet humbler in birth and of greater attack, which was curtailed and then silenced by madness, saw what mattered in Edward Thomas's poems. He read I suppose the first collected edition of 1920 and jotted, among the manuscripts of his own verse, "Of that most glorious subject the earth too few men have written—the last I believe, with enthusiasm being Edward Thomas whose poem 'Scenes'"—i.e. "Digging", one of the better poems Roland Gant has reprinted among the prose — "is full of the real being of this stuff".

This interminglement of prose and verse could have been more satisfactory had Roland Gant cared more for the glorious inclusive subject and less for the country writing that he also attended. Once, Robert Frost declared that Thomas suffered "from a life of subordination to his inferiors", among whom, I suspect, he included such dreary poetasters as Thomas's superior friends Lascelles Abercrombie and Wilfrid Gibson, who evidently lacked the wit, and perhaps the willingness, to see into Edward Thomas, and help him—as Frost did so well—into his potentiality and achievement.

But then it is also unfortunate that masters of the glorious subject are so often subordinated after death to inferior criticism which escapes them and appropriates them, and treats them as if their *forte* had been once nostalgia and sentiment. Clare, Hardy, Ivivert, Andrew Young (and long ago Wordsworth), as well as Edward Thomas, have all been trivialized by one critic and another in this way. So it is that the editor of *this book piffles about "that reflective Celtic brooding"* which came to Edward Thomas "with his Welsh blood", and then inserts, among not the best of Thomas's not very good prose, as a rule not the best of his poems—"country" poems rather than the more passionate verses of being alive on the admired earth among humanity, "country" poems rather than "The Owl":

> And salted was my food, and my repose
> Salted and savoured, too, by the bird's voice
> Speaking for all who lay under the stars,
> Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice,

or "The Sun Used to Shine", in which Thomas versified his friendship with Robert Frost, or that poem to his wife in which he describes himself as

> A pine in solitude
> Cradling a dove,

poems in which the strong charms of cadence, structure and immediacy replace the weak corrupting charms of rural nostalgia.

Good soldier Chonkin

By Frank Tuohy

VLADIMIR VOINOVICH:
The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin
Translated by Richard Lourie
315pp. Cape. £4.95.

The opening of the recent exhibition of dissident art produced some comments on the misfortune of Russian painters in working in isolation from the fashionable trends of the 1950s and 1960s. If one were to apply such judgments to dissident novelists, one could only say that to have missed out on Robbe-Grillet and Sarraute, on Beckett and Brautigan, seems immensely to their advantage. Narration still narrates, "character" persists, and humour and pathos are possibilities.

At first glance, *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin* is old-fashioned enough. It starts with a gossipy paragraph about "the incident which set the whole affair in motion" which perhaps parodies Dostoevsky. Private Chonkin, set to guard a plane which has made a forced landing in a remote village, is forgotten by the authorities on the outbreak of war in 1941. He becomes a part of the village, sleeps with Nyura, a peasant girl, whose only friend till now has been a charming pig, Borka. He goes to know his neighbour, the disgusting Gladishev, a village Lysenko who is attempting to cross potatoes with tomatoes, but also brews vodka out of a kilo of sugar and a kilo of shit". Golubev, the head of the collective, is a complete fraud who lives in Gogol-like terror of a government inspection. Lyushka the milkmaid has become a heroine of labour since "she had broken with the world's way of milking cows and from now on was going to grab four udders at the same time, two in each hand".

Starting off as an extremely funny novel in the *Clochemerle* tradition, *Ivan Chonkin* takes off to become a grand burlesque of the Soviet system. This departure may have something to do with Vladimir Voinovich's realization (mentioned in the blurb) that the book would never be published in Russia. And so we hear of the Institution which over the years "waged a crippling war against its own citizens and waged it with unfailing success". Its agents arrive in the village in pursuit of Chonkin:

> As soon as the villagers caught sight of the men coming, they hid in their huts, peeking out cautiously from behind their curtains. The children stopped crying, even the dogs were not barking at the gates.
>
> There was a silence like that before dawn, when all those who go to bed late have already gone to bed and those who get up early have not yet got up. . . .

When an official confesses to having unwholesome thoughts about Stalin, his wife tells him to make a clean breast of it to the party:

> "But what's going to happen to our son? He's only seven, after all."
>
> "Don't you worry. I'll raise him to be a true Bolshevik. He'll even forget what your name was."

She helped her husband to pack his suitcase but refused to spend the rest of the night in the same bed with him, out of ideological considerations.

This blend of terror and comedy, the fearful and the farcical, gives an extraordinary feeling of elation, even of hope, to Voinovich's novel. As with so much Russian writing, pessimism may appear to be complete, but lacks the final touch of despair. Voinovich is obviously aware of Western writing—Gladishev owes something to Swift; in a nightmare some pigs dressed as party members are a tribute to Orwell; a fantasy of Stalin dressed as a woman may owe something to Evelyn Waugh's theory about Tito—but the general impression of his work is inspiriting.

Unfortunately the present translation is hardly more than serviceable. Attempting demotic American, it produces some curious effects: Chonkin and Nyura harvest their potato crops with "choppers"; someone is described as "munching on lard and eggs"; "snuck" becomes the past tense of "sneak". More than any other form, comedy depends on style. But *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin* emerges triumphantly in spite of these obstacles.

Id man out

By Eric Korn

HUBERT SELBY:
The Demon
312pp. Marion Boyars. £4.95.

Harry White, the forwant-of-a-better-word hero of Hubert Selby's shrewd, sour and captivatingly unwholesome novel, starts as an all-time heel and rapidly deteriorates. *Randy as a stoat, but less cuddle-*some, he justifies his joyless rapacity by seeing himself as at once the prey and the benefactor of voracious broads: "Harry was not what one would call a women's libber but he did think the double standard grossly unfair." He prefers to limit his philanthropies to married women, to minimize the risk of a lasting involvement and to increase the anxious guilt which is his "real reward". His technical achievements, both in bed and on the way to and rapidly from, are considerable; the benefits small, for though egotistic to the point of mania, his ego is virtually absent. The head which Selby invites us to inhabit is a passive recorder of visceral emotions; gut-churning highs and terrors and testicular lust.

Consequently this man-shaped thing is easily manipulated by his boss, an evil parent who threatens and rewards (promotion, call girls —"I'm going to help you relax, we'll call some relaxers") to produce a willing corporate robot: "When I need something done I want to be able to push this button and know it will be done." White responds as eagerly as a deprived experimental rat, good at his ill-defined but plainly disgusting job. When unencumberable "randiness interferes with his smokescreen marriage is recommended accordingly he falls for a Nice Girl, though the strain of having good feelings is almost overwhelming: "he just sat and talked and joked and laughed and had the best time of his life as he fought the demon that was welling up inside him, growling and growing and causing his inner eye to blink with dismay and confusion". *After his marriage* ("Wise move, Harry, very wise move") the dismay increases, despite the rewards of large house, cute child, executive vice-presidency and sexual satisfaction (in the only way he could describe this vague feeling of his was that he felt like he was in no hurry to go").

The lunchtime lusts begin again, Harry watching himself in bewilderment, perpetually inquiring "what the hell is going on here?". Sublimation by horticulture is spectacularly unsuccessful. Things get worse, none too credibly: Harry's drive to self-defilement accelerates, he turns to pilfering, burglary and eventually anonymous murder.

Selby's style is deadpan, the hyperboles those of his characters: "The longer she dangled, the greater the excitement, the tigher the yearning feelings became and the more it spread itself out in undulating rings through his body until it reached the tips of his fingers." He is an unflinching recorder of all varieties of corpse-speech—schizoid jollity, murderous resentment, panic. Only occasionally does the caricature become too crude: the fatuous analyst ("I have a great deal of experience in this area—dealing with repressions and unconscious conflicts. As a matter of fact I have published many papers on the subject.") is too facile a target for a subtle writer. Nor is he afraid of a flat embarrassing explicitness: "The guilt and remorse next morning were severe and painful, but not as bad as the constant fight against desire and those vague and undefined feelings of fear, anxiety and impending doom. And, in the final analysis, he had no choice." But is the final analysis White's or Selby's? There are disturbing theological implications in the title, the final scenes, and the various biblical epigraphs with which the book is decorated. Is Selby attempting a literate version of that fashionable diabolism that makes evil a subversive alien, an un-American activity, a thing from another world? The symptoms are described in the most contemporary terms, but the diagnosis is medieval.

Arcadia at war

By Roger Garfitt

DEREK ROBINSON:
Kramer's War
345pp. Hamish Hamilton. £3.95.

Aficionados of the action-packed thriller are likely to be disappointed in *Kramer's War*. It comes as close to being a novel of peaceful coexistence as a war book can. The setting is Jersey, considered indefensible and surrendered in 1940 to the first Luftwaffe pilot to land at the airport, pistol in hand. The Germans saw the chance for a propaganda exercise, a model occupation to convince the mainland British that they had nothing to *fear from an invasion: they pro*ceeded to administer the island with unusual tact.

Anomaly equals comedy, an equation that Derek Robinson is quick to develop. General Rimmer, the new fortress commandant, arrives fresh from shooting partisans in Yugoslavia, to learn that he governs Jersey not only in the *name of the Führer* but in the name of His Majesty King George VI. He attends a German military funeral, to find the local population there in force, borrowing the German pallbearers to bear their dead and the German band to accompany their hymn, sung lustily to the tune of "Deutschland über Alles". The only warlike sound is the churning of cement-mixers as Colonel Schumacher, winner of the Führer's competition for the best-designed bunker, stiffens the island with half a million cubic metres of concrete, it being Hitler's whim to prove the place defensible after all.

Comedy, however, is only part of Mr Robinson's intention. He attempts the difficult feat of bringing real loss into a comic world, real war into Arcadia. Jersey survives, not by collaboration, but by a necessary compromise, the islanders being dependent on the Germans for supplies, the Germans dependent on the islanders for services. The compromise is a fine line, negotiated daily between the Bailiff, Daniel de Wilde, and the German Civil Administrator, Count Limner. This civilized procedure has been developed over four years. All it takes to destroy it is the arrival of a hero, in the person of Earl Kramer Jr., bombardier of a ditched American Liberator, washed ashore in his rubber dinghy four days before D-Day. Kramer has no sooner landed than he improvises a campaign of sabotage. At once General Rimmer is back on familiar ground. He feels the Yugoslav itch in his trigger finger: either the saboteur is found, or there will be reprisals.

The subplot has a similar oscillation between the comic and the serious. As well as locating Kramer, the islanders have to complete a complex sequence of black market deals (an unashamed crib from *Catch 22*) in order to purchase urgently needed medical supplies. Martin, the German male nurse who will smuggle the sup*plies back on the German supply* ship, the Schleswig-Holstein, is the lover of Nancy, an English nurse in whose house Kramer is hiding. When Kramer catches sight of Martin and Nancy making love in the summerhouse, their naked bodies remind him of an atrocity photograph. This image forms part of the book's darker theme, together with an account of a Gestapo raid on a farmhouse, and glimpses of the Russian slave labourers worked literally to their deaths in building the bunkers. The two themes are cruelly resolved when Kramer survives, after a fashion, but the Schleswig-Holstein is sunk with all hands.

The tonal modulation from comic to serious is achieved largely through the medium of Major Wolff, a most engaging character. Wolff, Rimmer's adjutant, is a shell-shocked veteran of the Russian Front. His shock takes the form of a complete inability to think seriously about the war: he lingers amiably in the background of the action, undoing the sort of remarks that Harpo Marx might have made if Harpo had ever spoken.

One only wishes that the English characters were as individual as the German. The Bailiff and his Controlling Council, in particular, are weakened as stereotypes, neither funny enough to be diverting nor serious enough to be engaging. The pace flags whenever they are in session. This vagueness of definition seems to reflect a final indecision on Mr Robinson's part as to what sort of book he wished to write. *Kramer's War* is not the fusion of thriller and black comedy that it could have been. It is essentially an old-fashioned pastoral comedy with certain new elements grafted on: an agreeable book, but not the book we might *have hoped for from the author of The Goshawk Squadron.*

Incuriosity shop

By Anne Duchêne

DIANA MELLY:
The Girl in the Picture
120pp. Duckworth. £3.25.

This is a very short, colloquial and generally readable novel, so it seems *worth pointing out that it is not*, on that account, either slight or quickly read. "It's only half a story. I was born a girl, says its subject at one point, and Diana Melly has some pretty chilling things to say about that helplessness.

Her heroine and narrator, Stella, comes of a family which after some scrabblings towards coherence and respectability collapses, throwing her early into the mark-no-face with no assets beyond good looks and good nature. Stella's first precocious encounters with male sexuality are as disconcerting and unbeautiful as most girls' are, but by the age of fifteen she rather enjoys being a hostess and stripper in a club where the dressing-room relationships are quite like something in Angela Brazil, and the atmosphere out front is one of an "innocent, non-involving naughtiness". The phrase is useful: Stella is certainly naughty, but equally certainly an innocent, as anxious to please and be loved as to love. What matters most, in the end, is the non-involvement.

There is much comedy in her clear-eyed narrative, especially in the protensions of the variously amusement males—one of them even plans to turn Stella into a "lady"—and her own usually belated recognition of what is happening. There is also sadness—in the slow disintegration into sleaziness of her mother, for instance; and a good deal of ugliness, as in the suave, Barbican-dwelling gentlemen who like to exploit little girls on Saturday afternoons, and by whose elegance Stella is, for a time, dazzled. She also has a predictably doomed marriage, a baby, and a nervous breakdown, before the book comes full circle.

It does this very unobtrusively, requiring that one turn back to the first pages, where the older Stella talks about "being what other people want". Because we are probably somewhat anaesthetized nowadays against sexual brutality, it only comes over slowly what Ivy extrapolations have to be made from the story: about uncertain adults and insufficiently loved children about the unpreparedness of girls in the face of sexuality; about the loneliness of being treated as an object, and the corruption of coming to see other people as objects; and about how much a fashionably aimless way of life depends on a "dispersed incuriosity that dare not raise annihilating questions. All of which sounds a bit portentous. It was certainly not Diana Melly's intention to suggest that the young girls need a letter-day Elizabeth Fry. She has, though, with considerable discretion and humour and discipline, made a sound comment about female vulnerability.

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Faust things Faust

By Valentine Cunningham

ANNE ROIPHE:
Torch Song
225pp. Secker and Warburg. £3.90.

Writing novels about novelists plunges you into deep waters. Do you stick to the man and the life anterior to and surrounding the art, with just the odd Hollywoodian rush at keyboard or typewriter? Or do you go straight, or at least modernistically sprvly, for the work: the approach more Sterne, of a Gide or a Flann O'Brien giving us their novel, or a novel anyway, in all of its making—flywheels, gut, engine-room rawly exposed—in a fiction become, or becoming, its own subject? Evidently man and works are difficult to shunt convincingly together; creation remains a perhaps unutterable mystery. For every *Horse's Mouth* there are, as it were, several *Portraits of the Artist* as something else, as ur-artist or post-artist or artist in varieties of gossip-columnist's agony or ecstasy —as the stuff, in other words, of his biographers rather than of his critics.

Dilemmas notwithstanding, Anne Roiphe gives us a novelist. What is more she gives us her Jim Morrison in a fairly traditional kind of fiction. There is, then, no suggestion of our getting any extended sort of novel from him within her novel; there is a decided tilt towards the circumambiences of Jim's art rather than much attempt at plucking out the heart of his mystery while he is actually at the writing desk. Man and works are not being strenuously coupled. They are, however, interestingly contiguous. That is, Jim goes in for the Faustified life of the *poète maudit*—he has decidedly unboring sexual proclivities, needs his whores and the gaming tables—and the novels he turns out are thought by his critics to suggest the Thomas Mann whom Jim is repeatedly presented as admiring. Anne Roiphe's play is, then, bold and sensible—Mann being one of the few novelists who have made convincing fictions about artists, and Faustian ones at that—even if the desired convincingness is finally more willed than actually brought off.

Jim is seen through the condoning eyes of Marjorie, his girlfriend and later his wife; and her benumbed tolerance, the continuing hero-worship, the kept-up sacrifice to his art do get less and less easy to take. His early boozing and puking, her first encounters with his onanistic preferences (always accompanied by her acting out the fantasies of violence that he demands), even his first evening jaunts to the brothel: all these the starry-eyed seeker after a place in the schoolurly footnotes of literary history might be believed as ready to overlook. But when his coarse brutalities go on, in country after country (New York follows Munich follows Paris follows New York), when he bullies her, heavily pregnant, into the snow to toil to the typewriter repair shop clutching his heavy, clapped-out portable; when he heralds his newborn as "someone to lecture on my work after I die", we wonder why the lowly worm did not turn and do him an injury with a rectal flashlight far earlier. It is only in its earliest stages that Marjorie's infatuation is made plausible.

Indeed, her account of meeting Jim in New York in her heady student days just after Big K (Korea) makes a nostalgically gripping read. "W. H. Auden had described the end of the civilized world from the point of view of a man on a bar-stool"; Trilling and Barzun had their fans; girls like Marjorie were getting into "Prufrock" and modern dance; good early-1950s men were already into existentialism and bop; and Jim, "accomplished, anguished, articulate", looking Byronic in his shades—like a cross between a jazz-man and an eighteenth-century composer, Marjorie thinks—had all the world of absurdism before him. "Some day I'm going to write about all this", he would say, vomiting over his shoes.

Quite, though, what this novel is in the end driving at is a bit hard to determine. It sounds frequently like a plea for women, Jim's narcissism, his male heartlessness, are almost matched by the callousness of Marjorie's father's Saturday-afternoon adulteries, by her brother's frankly anti-feminist Judaic orthodoxy, even by her Catholic friend Mary's jesuitically cunning advisers. Yet there's no tone of vindication or triumph over Marjorie's second marriage to a regular medical guy (and, after all, Jim left her, not she him). The ending, with its affirmed scene of ordinary family barbecue on the beach, might seem like a plea for normalcy against bohemianism and Baudelairean oddity. Yet the earlier rejection by Marjorie of her mother's bourgeois concerns—the world of good marriages and sound investments, of steady jobs, family links, children, and ordinary jobs—as a set of pursuits for zombies is never really repudiated. A mess of tones and tendencies, then: but it's life's messiness, and *Torch Song*, for all its stretching of credulities in the matter of Jim's exoticism and Marjorie's devotedness, is finally attractive because of the sense it gives of life being in fact inconclusive like this—and of the contradictory strains of a period just needing to be accepted, like this.

Hidden densities

By Michael Gilkes

WILSON HARRIS:
Da Silva da Silva's Cultivated Wilderness and Genesis of the Clowns
148pp. Faber. £3.95.

The present need for what Nicholas Mosley called an "intelligent language of crisis" capable, through paradox and allusion, of holding apparent opposites together, is a practical concern of Wilson Harris's writing. His novels, a continually deepening exploration of "the problem of opposite tendencies", use paradoxical, allusive language ("on the border between logic and magic", as Anthony Burgess describes it) to convey the interdependence of opposites: "strong", sovereign cultures, "weak" or vanished civilizations.

The hero of *Da Silva da Silva's Cultivated Wilderness* is married and lives in a Kensington flat. He is a composite man. Born in Brazil of Spanish, Portuguese and African stock, orphaned early, he survives cyclone and flood and is adopted by the British ambassador. He grows up in England with access to his rich benefactor's library and thrives on a varied cultural diet; an interest in painting develops and he gradually becomes convinced that his "parentless" condition obliges him to create, to "paint" himself and his world anew. Seeing everything in terms of his art, he discovers new "illuminations" and "unpredictable densities" within the most apparently solid and uniform people and places. As his "palaibage" multiply, the range of his awareness widens, relationships deepen. His rather bare life becomes a crowded canvas of interlocking past and present lives. He sketches "hidden densities" in Holland Park: the statue of Lord Holland (himself an adopted orphan) looks across exotic woodland, across "Wildernesse" theatre risen from ruined Great House, towards the New Commonwealth institute, seeing "Commonwealth heritage" glinting in the sun. "A dying empire, a newborn commonwealth." Da Silva mounts an exhibition at the Institute and the various cultural horizons that meet his eye as he "paints" his way along the Institute's three decks merge into a complex landscape shining with "the glimmering light of a perception of value beyond the quantitative mirage of civilization": the beginning of a genuine "homecoming".

Genesis of the Clowns emerges from the brooding recollections of Frank Wellington, who also lives in a London flat: Wellington, a government land surveyor in British Guiana in the 1940s, had settled in Britain in 1954. One morning in the 1970s he receives an anonymous letter telling him of the death of Hope, the black foreman of a survey team he had led thirty years ago in the interior. At the same time a letter from a solicitor in Hope Street, Dunfermline, brings news of a small inheritance through the death of a relative in Scotland. It is the first of a number of related coincidences. His now receptive mind drifts back into the past where he is, once again, leader and paymaster of a racially mixed crew. As the ghosts of the men again come forward to the paytable, Wellington finds that his relationship with each has been subtly altered.

These two novels are complementary explorations of modern existence. The fullest blossoms swirling "in circles and counter-circles" along Holland Villas Road conjure up the contrary undercurrents of Wellington's river surveys as well as those of "revolutionary" Guyanese politics and society (and of societies in general). The tent-like Commonwealth Institute of *Da Silva etc* reappears as Wellington's fragile tent, the collapse of which, during a thunderstorm, forces him to question his role as father-figure and colonial "master" of all he surveys through the inverting eye of his theodolite. Both painter and surveyor, the complementary worlds of art and science, recognize the need for a revolution of sensibility, a new "circulation of the light".

Romany rising

DAVID GARNETT:
Up She Rises
272pp. Macmillan. £3.95.

Clementina Carey was born a crofter's daughter on the east coast of Scotland before the Napoleonic wars. By the end of her life she had been received at the court of Tsar Nicholas I. In this novel her great-grandson, David Garnett, has created a warm and affectionate portrait of a courageous woman who had to curb the independence and restlessness she had inherited from her impulsive father, a man proud of his aristocratic connections but nevertheless the friend of gypsies, in order not to mar the upward rise brought about by her marriage to Peter Lamond. A serious young fishing captain pressed into the navy, he survived Trafalgar to become master of a sloop of war. Retired on half-pay after the battle of Waterloo, his later career, building and commanding paddlewheel steamships, took Clementina to Edinburgh, London, Lübeck—and finally St Petersburg, and thirty years of cool-headed ambition with a sound grounding in mathematical principles which was the basis of so many Scottish success stories in the nineteenth century.

David Garnett rightly insists that *Up She Rises* is a novel, not family history. Certainly it seems to be the novelist who runs a gypsy strand throughout the narrative—Clementina's childhood friends return, at crucial stages of her later life—and completes the circle by having her remember a Romany song before she dies. And it is the finvalue who has brought to life Old Lamond, Peter's grandfather: disreputable and eccentric, herring-scales sparkling in his uncombed beard, the redoubtable yet indomitable old rogue. Yet the reader is always aware of the straight lines of biography that underlies the fictional mouldings, and at times it is tantalising not to know what has been invented, and in what form the story has come down through the generations: whether orally or in letters, or a diary.

Susan Kennedy

All the signs

By Robin Buss

PASCAL BRUCKNER:
Monsieur Tac
265pp. Paris: Le Sagittaire.

Pascal Bruckner's first novel is a journey through the alphabet. Its hero, Monsieur Tac, finds himself in a universe in which the signs are reality. The world is a book, and language, by means of which Tac has variously been thought possible to open doors, to seduce women, to count sheep, is the only reality. But the signs are the natural laws of Tac's world, and even a chance meeting of letters, such as considered a lewd form of conferring-trick, have become an essential chemistry in the natural world of things. Once it is decreed that D shall follow C, it becomes inevitable that to pass from one to the other Tac should discover the secret of the word *ordre*, while the letter T is triumphant if he vous allez en 7 sentences but to another *cirque* further on.

Playing with the rules in his way is part of the game. The English tradition in this field, and its perpetuation in domestic amusements like crossword puzzles and weekend competitions, may lead the English reader to think that this is a rather un-French book; especially since we are brought up to believe that the French have too much reverence for their language to mess around with it. In fact there is an edge to M Bruckner's writing, partly but not only in his celebration of the rich vocabulary of sex, which recalls the Grand Siècle. Circle production of *Tom Jones* (1749) given allowance for the fact that, by its very nature, Monsieur Tac is unexportable one must recognize it as the product of an important strain in contemporary French culture.

However much one may delight in the 22 witty sketches, those of seven pages, and the occasional dialogue, Monsieur Tac would surely be otherwise than contrived, but it is a contrivance sustained with remarkable skill, in which one may return with pleasure to the variations and verbal ingenuities which went unnoticed on first reading. *Tac* is about the values of language, and language is so much a part of us that we are unaware of its power and possibilities of its deceptiveness only when it fails to do what we want it to do. It is this which makes M Bruckner's journey through the alphabet a compelling fantasy.

Sicilian capers

By Percival Blake

LEONARDO SCIASCIA:
I pugnalatori
95pp. Turin: Einaudi. L2,000.

In *I pugnalatori*, Leonardo Sciascia investigates for himself the contemporary investigation of a celebrated Sicilian crime of the last century; he believes that it was, for motives as predictable as they were dishonourable, botched. On October 2, 1862, thirteen citizens of Palermo were stabbed more or less simultaneously in the street, all in the lower abdomen, by what appeared to be the members of some subversive faction. The immediate criminals were discovered, tried and sentenced, three of them to the guillotine, the rest to imprisonment. None of them was ambitious or ideologist enough to have conceived, let alone paid for this act of urban terrorism, but the attempts of the prosecution to incriminate the rich, aristocratic ringleader who had clearly both prepared and subsidized it were defeated. Wealth and influence overruled justice; the police-work was vitiated by the loyalties of politicians to their own kind.

The conspiracy, a clever exercise in the now commonplace "strategia della tensione", was a political one. Its leader, locally, was the Principe Sant 'Elia, a nobleman generally thought to be a supporter of Italian unity and of the House of Savoy but who seems in fact to have been in the pay of the Bourbons, currently plotting to recover the island they had lost in 1860. The hero of Sciascia's plain and bitter account of the case is the prosecutor Guido Giacosa, an honest, moderate Piedmontese who was thoroughly sickened by his exposure to the feudal values of Sicily. Sciascia accepts Sant 'Elia's guilt and has retold this upsetting story in the belief that Sicily today is every bit as bad as Sicily in 1862. The forms of corruption are the same and so are the forms of illusion: Sicilians feel an absurd nostalgia for a past of order and decency which actually the island has never known. Sciascia has assembled his narrative from the records with extreme simplicity and economy; the indignation which he allows himself he intends as a corrective to the irony of so many of his fellow-Sicilians, because irony expresses fatalism and kills all hope of improvement in the morality of Italian institutions.

Unknown Islington

By David Nokes

FRED BASNETT:
Gropers
384pp. Gollancz. £4.95.

Gropers is a kind of low-life *Jumpers*. Instead of the trampolines and trapezes of academic philosophy, we have the dingy basements and narrow alleys of occultism in Islington. "Groping" is the hobby of the occupants of 77 Middlemint Square. In theory they are groping towards mystical enlightenment; in practice, most of the *adepti* are content with the incidental physical communions that come their way. The landlord, Peter Lamond, runs occult orgies which they perform as Satanists. Astor of London spirits Louderwilk uses photographs of Hindu gods to facilitate massage. *The Other Side*, on the other hand, is a religious cult. Peter's At the Egyptian ceremony, a good deal of unpleasantness involving a goat, an undergrad bur overeager girl, a dildo and a Welsh rugby scarf is both averted when Rupert Mandible, sceptical and gentleman, interposes his wooden leg.

The gropers themselves are an amiable if stereotyped bunch of eccentrics, loosely associated with the arts, if only to the extent of selling Occle-brac in Camden Passage. One of the quieter Gropers, Mr Pre-Raphaelite optics to trace, is shy about his natural history of Palimpsest of the back-garden pond. The Pennyrile Kvass Company, home-made wines.

He had carefully filled each lock with water to produce a certain note—the Chablis was C natural, the Burgundy was E, and the rosé G—the idea being that, at some point in time, the plops and plips would occur simultaneously, producing an harmonious chord.

The others, artists, whores and the statutory gay couple, have less agreeable habits. But all are treated with a comic edge that skirts the danger of sentimental exaggeration. Fred Basnett is very good at casual comic dialogue, and the book is full of it. Haidan Mac Cazzler stops by a fish stall in Chapel Market:

"How you get dem flyin' fish?"

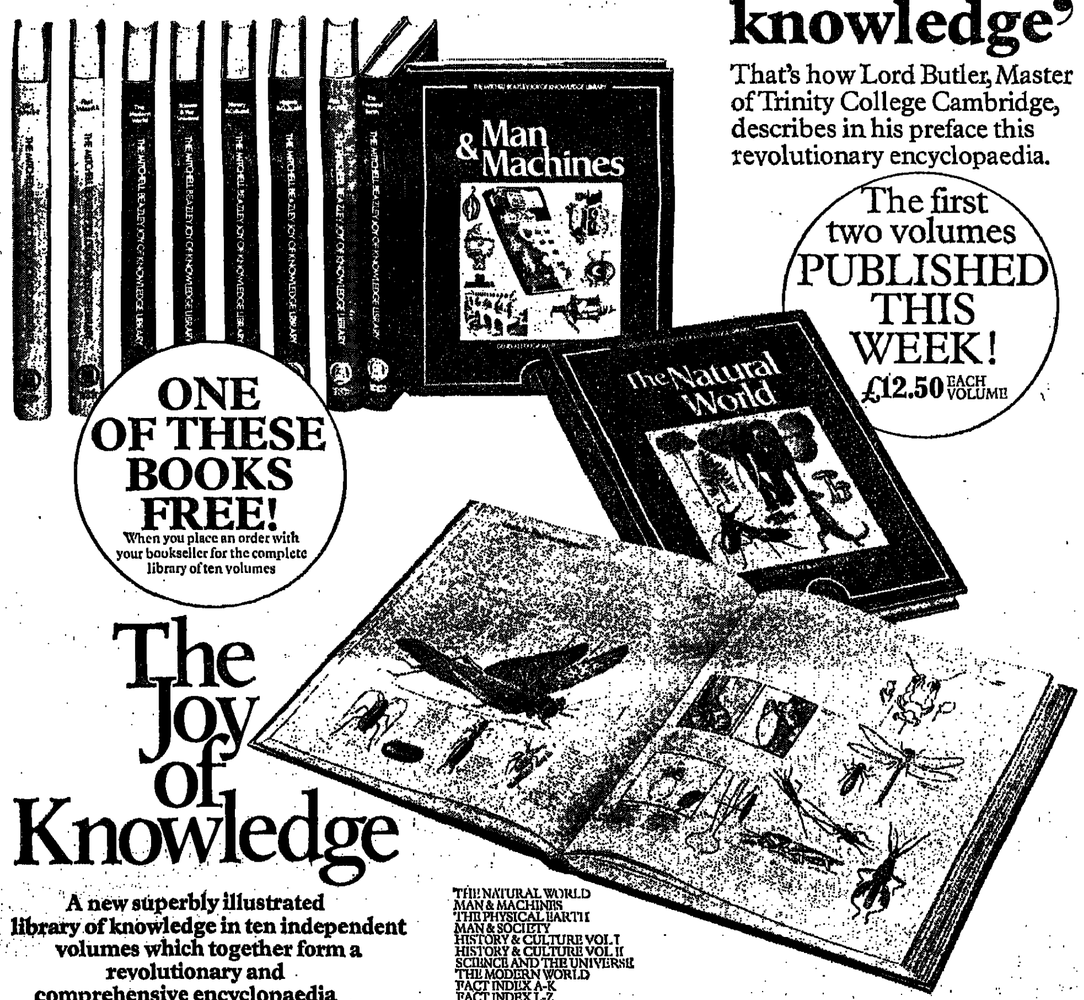
The stunned owner squirted a rubber bulb of water over them.

"They fly 'ere, darlin', don't they?"

Gropers is not primarily about its characters but about Islington. Instead of a plot, we have a series of episodes, each one carefully located in some celebrated gaudy, Islingtonian nook. Groper Derry has a talent for pastiche that Tom Keating might envy. It is a virtuosity Fred Basnett also shares. One can watch him slipping into period for each topographical set-piece. Here Chaps Merrick in Islington mode, a modern derry has market, he becomes an Islingtonian, and makes of it a Bartholomew Fair that mingles the mystery of the Casbah with the abundance of Covent Garden, and the patter of Petticoat Lane. Then he clamps on his Pre-Raphaelite optics to trace, in tiny detail, the sociological development of the back-garden pond: the Pennyrile Kvass Company. It is a book full of a grotesque humour that takes most of the gropers to remarkably sticky ends.

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The book as Romantic landscape

By Peter Conrad

GORDON N. RAY :
The Illustrator and the Book in England from 1790 to 1914
336pp. Oxford University Press for the Pierpont Morgan Library. £33.

Collecting is the most ordinary of vices, the transfiguration of avarice and monomania. The collector cannot succeed without being greedy and obsessive, but he renders those faults of character disinterested and altruistic. Sometimes the nasty logic of his passion drives the collector to a joyless possessiveness : like Getty he becomes the niggardly guardian of his hoard, not trusting others to derive delight from his treasures and too ogreishly vigilant to take pleasure in them himself. Gordon Ray is, however, a benign, enlightened, open-handed collector, who has made his treasures available for public inspection. Last year he exhibited some of his English illustrated books at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York ; the catalogue prepared for that occasion eventually expanded into the present study, *The Illustrator and the Book in England from 1790 to 1914*, which, with its hundreds of plates, is itself already an item to be coveted by collectors.

Dr Ray's introduction describes that strange admixture of acquisitive and even larcenous urges with a selfless reverence for art which Henry James understood so well, and which makes his characters single-minded collectors. Dr Ray's uncovering of a dusty cove of illustrated books in the basement of a London dealer recalls the accidental discovery of the golden bowl ; his summer orgies of expenditure in London, followed by autumns spent unpacking parcels in New York, reenact innocently that refinement of pillage and plunder by which Mr Verver stocks his museum in American City. Like James's hypersensitive looter, Dr Ray has reassembled the disorganized chaos of a European tradition into a logical and self-sufficient American museum—a "museum of the book" as he calls it. The catalogue is more than a labour of bibliographical stock-taking ; it amounts, informally, to a critical history of literary illustration. Even that physical description of editions which in general has such a heraldic tedium is made vivid and relevant, for Dr Ray's subject is precisely the transformation of the book into a precious and decorative object : itself a work of art, not merely the capsule for one. In decanting on the glazed paper of Rossetti's Tennyson edition or the mock-Persian binding of Tenniel's *Lalla Rookh*, Dr Ray is doing more than fondling curiosities : he is exploiting an attempt to turn the book from a shoddy mechanical contrivance to a cult-object, an image of the dual exclusiveness of wealth and art.

Recently all the arts have had to endure enslavement to what Walter Benjamin called "the age of mechanical reproduction". Music is known from gramophone records, paintings from black-and-white photographs. Art works have had to sacrifice their aura of individuality, as Benjamin regretted. The book, however, knew this particular deprivation long before the other arts. Since Gutenberg, literature has been the unprotesting victim of techniques of mechanical reproduction. The binders and illustrators who interest Dr Ray were romantic Luddites attempting, so to speak, to reclaim literature from its industrial shame by creating rather than manufacturing books. They challenged Gutenberg by hand-making and hand-decorating volumes which were not infinitely reproducible but jealously confined to limited editions ; they challenged, as Dr Ray's own book does, the ease of universal literacy which the mechanical press had made possible by the outlandish expense of their work. Literature was to return to its origins, becoming again a handicraft : like a painter manually accrediting his work, the maker in some cases signed all authorized copies of the edition.



W. M. Thackeray in his later years had plans for a pack of comic playing cards, but although he made many drawings and had some of them engraved, the enterprise was never completed. One of his pen-and-ink drawings was this three of spades, with Gibbon, Boswell and Johnson, "from the originals in sticking plaster by Miss Williams". It appears in The Illustrator and the Book, *reviewed here.*

Dr Ray's catalogue-entries document this reconversion of book-making from an industry into a craft. Even the habit of attaching an embossed book-plate, noted in some copies of the fine art books of the Dalziel brothers, sentimentally conscripts the volume to the owner's individuality. It is no longer a mere luxurious extension of his emotional existence. The old editions of the Everyman's Library institutionalized these inscriptions and made the book-plate a tablet of moral law : the book now promised to be loyal to its reader, to "go with thee and be thy guide in thy most need". The book can be made a token of value by its emotional associations or its aesthetic preciosity and also because it is an embodiment of work, because its printing represents an arduous attainment of perfection. Dr Ray's collection includes Digby Wyatt's *Industrial Arts of the Nineteenth Century*, a case in which the exigencies of chromolithographic printing made the book itself an image of the industrial ingenuity of 1851 which it set out to celebrate : Dr Ray remarks of the chromolithographs that

> the average number of printings required for a subject was seven, the maximum fourteen. When it is remembered that the stone had to be wiped clean after each printing of 1,300 copies of every plate, the overwhelming amount of expert work required will be appreciated.

For Wyatt, industrial progress is measured by technical elaboration : his bibliographical decor is suffocating in its ponderous richness. More demotically, the books of Joseph Crawford also make bibliographical form an image of industrial content : he was a Newcastle *rope* manufacturer, and he printed his books, aptly, on rag-paper, reclaiming shoddy raw materials for art. The productions of Walter Crane or Morris's Kelmscott Press attempt less literature to their theories of design and treat books like wall-paper or ceramic tiles. At the beginning of Dr Ray's survey, artists illustrate excerpts from texts ; nearer the end, they appropriate the book in its entirety and, rather than finding space for pictorial niches, design it throughout as if refurbishing a house. Morris, following Ruskin's dogmatic opposition between useful work and useless toil, insisted that the printer must be a "handicraftsman", making goods he could be proud of, not sluggishly superintending the rotation of a conveyor belt, and although Dr Ray's terminal date is 1914, the last in this tradition of Ruskinian artisans is Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press. The vigorous Ruskinian aesthetic has been slightly adjusted : the work of making books is now not useful but therapeutic, for the cranking of the hand-press, the sawing, stitching and parcelling, were devised to provide Virginia Woolf with a remedy for her mental distempers. According to Ruskin's understanding of aesthetic labour, Virginia Woolf was as oppressed a worker as any, not a designer, but slaved on the production-line in her Bloomsbury basement—but this dull repetitiveness, excoriated by the Pre-Raphaelites, constituted for her the healing value of the exercise.

Dr Ray's illustrators made the book, as he says, a museum-piece ; they also made it a scaled-down version of romantic landscape. Keats sensed the pictorial potentialities of the book as an opening into a distance of fantasy. Reading was for him a kind of travelling inside a picture. The epic poem he called a little space to wander in ; Chapman's Homer was a realm of gold ; *King Lear* he called an "old oak forest", as if the text itself were a correlative of the penitential wath, so that the reader in suffering through it is retracing the painful journey of the hero. The illustrator's function is to excavate this pictorial depth of fantasy inside the book. Across the range of Dr Ray's catalogue, it is possible to notice the Romantic book beginning as a representation of landscape, but gradually changing into a form of landscape.

Blake landscapes his pages by the device of cutting windows in the drawing paper, as in his edition of Gray's poems, in which to fit the blocks of text. The design is an interior transformation of the text. Spatially, the pages of verse, which Blake cut from a copy of Gray, remain on the flat plane of literal words, while the designs open out into a region of solid imagery. Romantic printings, such pierce-gives—for instance *Wuthering Heights*, which is so concerned with windows and the passage through them from protection to the stormy dark or the other way round, from savage exclusion to safety and shelter—are often windows opening into distances extending as far as the imagination can reach, Kantian magic casements. Blake reverses this spatial relationship : in the volume illustrating Gray, the windows here are blocked up, occupied by the blind of the text ; but all around spreads the vast open distance of the imagery. Encircling the text, with its irregularities and grotesque marvels of the illustration flourish in the undisciplined space between the blocks of print, as if what is too daring or too secret for Gray to say can be drawn by Blake.

Exiled to the edge of the page, Blake's characters have various ways of taking over their cramped and inconvenient space and making it their own. In the northern epic poems of Gray they commandeer the block of text and hold it up in front of them as a banner or a shield ; in the elegiac poems they treat it reverently as a funeral stone. Selima the cat even uses the text as a perch, as Odin carries the text on his back as armature. In Blake's designs for Gray's "Elegy" the oblongs of text hang in the air like tombstones. On the title-page of the volume, Genius soaring aloft on a swan carries the inset text with him as a surfboard or a Shelleyan air-ship. Blake's designs set the text in motion ; Bentley's for the same poems simply improvise ruined or fancifully unstable scaffoldings around the text. Bentley's pages are vistas, with the charming decrepitude of the picaresque ; Blake's are visions.

The gap between poem and design becomes a source of spatial wit and drama. The characters in quotation the texts as shields, or tablets to be portentously unveiled, or as swings to support them in mid-air. Blake's later work abolishes this discrimination between the dull letter of the source and the freely associative spirit of illustration : he illuminates the words as well, instead of leaving them in the cold rationality of print. Words seem to catch fire, flickering into images or unfolding into flowers. By the time of "Jerusalem" words and images are entwined and inseparable. The poetry floats about the figures in heavy laden clouds ; on the title-page the words loop and curl in the air and are, like Blake's hybrid winged creatures, a means of representing the metamorphoses of the soul. Other Romantic illustrators manage to make the page suggest a landscape simply by the setting of an image on the blank paper. In his edition of Rogers's *Italy* Turner's landscapes, made of air, seem hardly to have materialized ; being "pictures of nothing", as Hazlitt called them, they are caught just before they evanesce into the blankness of the paper. In Cruikshank's "The Final Chance" from *Oliver Twist* the whiteness of the paper is not atmospheric mist but vertiginous height or dizzying depth. Cruikshank's sikes on a steep rooftop peers over the edge into the precipasse of the street, and his terror is unsettlingly dramatized by the isolation of the image on the paper and its abrupt drop into the vacancy of the empty page, into which Sikes will hurtle.

Late-Romantic books do not open into landscapes but contract the landscapes inside their covers. The bindings of Charles Ricketts's Vale Press editions are overgrown poisonous gardens, with sickly gold flowers strangling tentacles across the volume. Beardsley's bindings are also maps of the perverted world inside the covers : for *The Rape of the Lock* he makes a profane altar, in which the Baron's shears point towards Belinda's enskied lock, for *Volpone* a hurricane of disintegrating black blossoms. The bibliographical details of the Pope edition make the book physically demonstrate the metaphor which is the poem : in 1897 a "bijou edition" appeared, in which Beardsley said that his "pictures" had been "reduced to well-nigh postage stamps" ; but this miniaturization adapts the book to the fetishistic littleness of the poem, in which the adult responsibilities of existence, love, worship, executed wreiches and regal councils, shrink into inconsequence, while trivia correspondingly dilute into threatening immensity.

The catalogue incidentally records the illustrator's progressive liberation from his text. The early Romantics like Fuseli deviously employ the text as an alibi, since the pretence of literary commentary allows them to indulge private fantasies without accepting responsibility : the image is disowned by attribution to the source. As caricature in the late eighteenth century granted to the painter the freedom of proscribed areas of experience, but allowed him to excuse his self-exploratory nightmares as corrective satire, so illustration licenses the painter to investigate an infernal repertory of spectral images and then to disavow them by blaming them on Shakespeare or Milton, whose words allegedly evoked them.

Fuseli's covert liberties with his texts are exemplified by Dr Ray's exhibit, the 1792 edition of Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy*. The illustrations positively seduce the text's pious rationality. Lavater's hope was to define a science of temperament which would "promote the knowledge and the love of mankind" ; but while Lavater resolves character into a physiological diagram, Fuseli decomposes it into phantasmal distortion, contributing faces deranged by fear and lunacy, or collapsed in misanthropic gloom. The narratives to which he yokes his fantasies are irrelevant or even non-existent : when Ryan asked the literary origin of one of the Lavater designs, which shows Count Bracciaferro moping over the mistress he has slain, Fuseli confessed he had made it up. He nervously depends on the sources as a camouflage ; but later in the Romantic century illustrators tend to capture the text and render it redundant. Trollope admitted using Millais's versions of his characters as his models : "I have carried on some of those characters from book to book, and have had my own early ideas impressed indelibly on my memory by the excellence of his delineation." Christina Rossetti was less enthusiastic about Laurence Housman's interpretation of her goblins, who became furtive literate capitalists, engrossed in gathering their fruit : she complained, "I don't think my Goblins were quite so ugly !"

The illustrators with whom Dr Ray's display concludes are impenitent in their revision of their texts. Beardsley's *Salomé* designs boast of their independence of their source by including caricatures of a bloated moon-faced Wilde, who has been reduced by the illustrator to one of his own dissipated characters. Dr Ray warns that "it is mistaken to think that he was contemptuous of the text he was illustrating", but though Beardsley may not despise the source he now considers his own account of it primary, not an illustrative appendage. He flaunts his interpretative liberty by proposing two contradictory notions of the heroine : in his first design, published in 1893, Salomé is a haggard spider, crouch in a sea of mud ; the next year in the second series this monster of sexual rapacity has become a vain mannequin, preoccupied with costume-changes, not the necrophiliac satisfaction of appetite. Her vices have been localized in her reading : copies of Zola and de Sade are left for consultation on her dressing-table. Although Dr Ray thinks Rackham's illustrations for Wagner's *Ring* "relatively conventional", they are notable for a similar audacious re-creation. As Beardsley made Alberich another overripe avatar of Wilde, so Rackham demeans Wagner's subterranean smiths and satanic engineers into gnarled elves, outcasts from the court of Oberon ; as Beardsley made Siegfried a limp aesthete, drooping fastidiously over the dragon, so Rackham translates him to his own idiom, and has him embrace Brünnhilde among the meagre twigs of a Nordic Kensington Garden.

Economic calamity is forcing us back into the dark ages of chained books : the expense of Dr Ray's book is sure to make it a rarity, even in libraries. This is a shame, because it is not addressed only to the affluent circle of his fellow-collectors but treats, from a revealing and original angle, the quarrel-some collaboration between the arts across the length of the Romantic period.

Inside the 40s

Derek Stanford

Derek Stanford—poet, critic and editor—looks at the 1940s from a very special viewpoint, for he was at the very centre of the literary scene.

In this personal narrative he recalls the personalities and factors that helped to change the cultural climate from the social realism of the 1930s into the more romantic phase of the post-war decade. Pacifists, conscientious objectors and socialists, who variously contributed to the literary ferment of the time, are sketched in. Dylan Thomas, who was for a while a friend of Derek Stanford, also figures in the book.

240 pages 16 pages illustrations
Shepheard-Walwyn (Publishers) Ltd
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The centrists in control

By John Morton Blum

GODFREY HODGSON :
In Our Time
America from World War II to Nixon
564pp. Macmillan. £7.95.

This thoughtful book provides the most useful synthesis yet published of the four decades of confidence, crises, and anxiety that constituted for the United States what Henry Luce had expected to be the American century. Godfrey Hodgson, an English journalist with long experience in Washington, has written a critical and discerning—if at times prolix and repetitious—account of American politics, domestic and international, focusing on the years 1961-72.

Hodgson's own summary of his thesis conveys its flavour :

> The disasters of the sixties, foreign and domestic, can be traced to a body of beliefs, to an ideology, and to the body of people who held them. . . . That ideology was the creation of an elite which . . . controlled enough of the expanding, powerful institutions of society to be without effective check or balance. . . . It was a liberal elite. Part of its strength came from a certain magic inhering in that word, a pervasive implication that one had better not criticize whatever the liberals did, for any alternative would be worse.

The new national elite and its ideology caused the United States to come under the sway of two dangerous illusions. The first was that the iniquities and injustices of American society were residual, and could be abolished by the expenditure of resources on a scale that need not involve any hard choice between priorities. . . . The other was that the United States could use its military power to change the world in conformity with its wishes and not itself be changed in the process.

In the development of this thesis, which has become conventional in American diagnoses of the national malaise, Mr Hodgson begins, as do most of those on whom he relies, with the victorious United States of V-J day, the world's military and economic giant. He proceeds rapidly to describe the marriage of an interventionist, anti-Soviet foreign policy to the new economics of domestic growth and affluence. He calls that union "liberal", though he does not admire that it was centrist, and he associates it with an "Establishment" recruited in the main from the Council on Foreign Relations ; its members were from the Manhattan legal and financial community, and their intellectual companions from the large foundations and the great universities, especially Harvard. Within the liberal establishment, there were those—Acheson, the Dulleses, the Bundys, and Kissinger—who gave a military cast to George Kennan's doctrine of containment. Operating through an imperial presidency, they interpreted the Soviet Union and its presumed allies in Communist China, North Vietnam, and elsewhere as calculating enemies. The domestic anti-communism of the McCarthy era intensified their resolve never to appear conciliatory towards the red forces of evil. That domestic red-baiting also destroyed any effective left in American politics and made the centre sensitive to attacks from the right, towards which it continually tilted. Meanwhile other liberals, particularly after 1961, energized a kind of state capitalism which was to produce a growth dividend that would mitigate poverty without recourse to the discomfort of a genuine redistribution of wealth and income. Destined to fail, that effort wasted American resources, as did continuing military spending and the wars in Asia.

For Mr Hodgson, the New Frontier and the Great Society represent the apogee of the liberal establishment, its confidence and its illusions. First the illusions and then the confidence collapsed under the impact of developments of the 1960s. The Vietnam War, carried into American homes by television, displayed the brutality and, after Tet, the futility of interventionism, and dispelled the myth of American omnipotence. The war also absorbed funds needed for the programme of the Great Society and precipitated the inflation that particularly hurt both blue-collar workers and the burghers of "Middle America". Meanwhile the civil rights movement in the South had left untouched Northern industrial poverty which affected increasing numbers of blacks and substantial numbers of whites, mostly the "ethnics". The hostility of those two groups exploded in the urban race riots in Los Angeles, Detroit and other cities where the frustrations of blacks with persisting inequality and their resulting racial self-consciousness clashed with the prejudices of the police. The police shared the common anger of white blue-collar and clerical workers over inflation, rising local taxes accelerated by the flight of the middle class to the suburbs, and the costs of federal welfare policies that seemed to favour blacks. They were angry, too, as were Middle Americans, with the antiwar and related demonstrations of American collegians, the children of privilege, and with the counter-culture and its disdain for bourgeois values. It was in those circumstances that Richard Nixon built his successful campaigns on the issue of law and order, a euphemism for hostility towards both young and black demonstrators, towards pot, rock, long hair, and promiscuous sex.

There is significant documentation and a subtlety in Mr Hodgson's argument which the foregoing summary cannot adequately suggest. His book contains astute analyses of various issues important to his case, among them the motives of the masters of commercial television, the troubles on the Berkeley campus, and the controversy over the direction of public education, including the problem of the integration of schools. But for all its virtues, the book is often unpersuasive.

In writing about international affairs, Mr Hodgson is too Washington-oriented. Consequently he tends to make the Cold War peculiarly American in origin. He observes that in 1945 the Soviet Union was too weak to constitute a danger to the United States, but he lightly passes over the Soviet threat to Western Europe. Europeans perceived that threat as genuine, a perception Americans shared both then and often later. Though the inaccessibility of Soviet records makes it impossible accurately to measure that threat, there is enough evidence available to demonstrate that it was not wholly illusory.

Mr Hodgson also damages his major arguments by failing to clarify the meaning of either "liberal" or "left". By making liberals centrists, he neglects significant liberal non-Marxist dissent. However uninfluential it may have been, it was expressed continuously, and often about the very matters to which Hodgson so often adverts. For example, *The New Republic* under the editorship of Gilbert Harrison regularly questioned the assumptions of Mr Hodgson's "liberal Establishment" and opposed foreign and domestic policies flowing from them. So, too, some of the "liberals" he associates with the new economics were advocates of a redistribution of wealth. Some genuinely liberal members of the Council of Economic Advisers under Kennedy and others in the same administration, fought for tax reform but lost to centrists in the Treasury and to conservatives in the Congress. In one extraordinary paragraph Mr Hodgson reveals the confusion of his labelling : he identifies Joseph L. Rauh Jr, as a "liberal" lawyer "left of . . . Establishment liberalism" and dedicated, with Walter Reuther, to the programme of the "Americans for Democratic Action, who "kept the flag of the Left flying".

Such labels have little or no meaning. Like *The New Republic*, the ADA spoke for liberal opinion in the United States, not for the "Establishment" and ADA members, Arthur Schlesinger Jr, for one, became favourite targets of the left. For its part, the "establishment" included many conservatives, men in the tradition of Elihu Root and Henry Stimson, neither of them even liberals or progressives. Mr Hodgson stumbles partly because of his uncritical acceptance of the gospel according to David Halberstam, who was prone to factual error. He also gives only superficial attention to the American left of the 1960s, a Marxist or neo-Marxist left. He writes with little enthusiasm for the Students for a Democratic Society, and less for Herbert Marcuse, who continually published significant critiques of American politics and society. Like Marcuse, the best of the SDS intellectuals never held the fantasies of Charles Reich or other advocates of escapism. And Mr Hodgson totally ignores the ablest American Marxists, important scholars and social critics like Barrington Moore Jr. and Eugene Genovese. Most seriously, he slights the campaigns of Eugene McCarthy and Robert F. Kennedy. By May 1968, Kennedy, a liberal, had attracted moderates and militants to his side, as well as blue-collar workers, blacks and Middle Americans.

Towards the end of *In Our Time* Hodgson implies that the left which American politics has lacked is a socialist left. Then, reversing his field, in his last paragraph he looks forward to a new consensus that will "harness those most precious of all resources . . . the energy, good sense and generosity of the majority of ordinary people". Those people have never been on the left. As long ago as 1904 Theodore Roosevelt set out deliberately to win them over and succeeded. They applauded his temperate reforms and his international adventures. Most of them had not been Populists in the 1890s, and it is fallacious in 1977 to imagine them as a "left", neo-populist or otherwise.

The imprecision of Mr Hodgson's analysis derives not the least from his failure to consult American history before 1945. He places the questions he asks too late in the long reach of the American past. The problems he shrewdly identifies are not wholly of recent origin. The illusion of American exceptionalism, the companion illusion of American mission and invincibility (originally only continental in application) have affected American politics and culture for two hundred years and more. So has racial hostility and, during most of that period, ethnic tension. For a century the same general profile of the distribution of wealth and income has persisted.

Yet for more than a century the productivity of the economy permitted a growth dividend, by any other name, that accounted in part for the American faith in social mobility and for the continual weakness of the radical left. The past several decades have again exposed the crucial problems that concern Mr Hodgson, but his "liberal establishment", whatever it is, while it did not solve those problems, did not create them, as he tends to imply.

The elite which Mr Hodgson constantly castigates had little representation in Congress, which has provided no better solutions than have the imperial presidents and their counsellors. Indeed the Congress, ordinarily more conservative than the executive, has by and large represented the majority of American people to whom Mr Hodgson finally looks for answers. That same majority has regularly rejected socialism, perhaps partly from recognition that a sufficient redistribution of wealth to assure an equality of opportunity—Mr Hodgson's commendable goal—depends first upon a sufficient creation of wealth, a task at which socialism has been no more successful, and in some countries notably less successful, than capitalism.

Mr Hodgson holds that liberalism has been tried and found wanting, but the liberalism of Joe Rauh and of *The New Republic* has not been much tried. It is a liberalism that respects both the role of experienced managers in public and private life, and their accountability to the people. It looks forward, with Mr Hodgson, to economic enterprises responsible to ecological considerations, to equity for blacks and women, and to a gradual redistribution of wealth and income, though not to total equality of circumstance. It rejects adventurism abroad but cultivates internationalism on a multilateral basis. If that liberalism is the doctrine of the left, then the left has a long tradition in American history.

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The intellectual quota

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The Migration of Social Thought 1930-1965.
283pp. New York: Harper and Row. $10.

The great 1920s and 1930s migration of European intellectuals fleeing from fascist tyranny was an event of outstanding importance in the cultural and university history of the United States. What America gained, Europe, at least for a period, lost: Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich still cannot rival the cultural vitality of their past or of London, Paris and New York today; in recent years German universities have attracted more attention through the disturbingly familiar physical and psychological brutality of their activist students than for the ferment of exciting and invigorating ideas to be found within them.

But did the migration to America of the Germanic component in serious European social thinking *fundamentally effect the character* and further development of that thinking or of any of the individual thinkers ? It is not true, in intellectual life, that for every action there is a reaction ; if America needed these migrants to shake it out of its intellectual provincialism, it does not follow that these Europeans needed migration to discover empiricism and research or those social processes which America had long before come to exemplify and symbolize for "advanced" social thinkers throughout the world. The great upheaval in the life of the European migrants and in the history of European social thought in the 1930s was not their migration, but the event that produced it—the rise of fascism and irrationalism and, for the more honest and sensitive, the increasing evidence of the ever more disgusting character of the Soviet Union and its world-wide network of servile communist parties.

The more recent, 1960s, revival of left, Hegelian, allegedly anti-fascist, social thinking—the impact of the Frankfurt School in America, for instance—has been a retreat from those lessons of the 1930s to the naivety that helped to make the 1930s possible. The heroes of that revival are those who learnt least from their migration.

At the same time, how great and important was the impact of European migrants on American university life, for instance ? Do we owe the patent Germanic style of much American academic thought to the Bendixes, Strausses, Friedrichs, etc, or to a long American tradition, interrupted by the First World War, of going to Germany for graduate work and inspiration—a tradition which produced that most "American" of sociologists, Talcott Parsons ?

Considerations such as these might not be prompted by more modest sociological or psychological studies of the migration itself, such as Laura Fermi's *Illustrious Immigrants* (1968). *The Sea Change* has much greater pretensions : it speaks not of the migration of thinkers but of the migration of social thought; it seeks to set this migration in the context of a general history of European social thinking from the 1890s onward. The work is the final volume of a trilogy that began with *Consciousness and Society : The Reorientation of European Social Thought 1890-1930* (first published in 1958) and continued with *The Obstructed Path : French Social Thought in the Years of Desperation 1930-1960* (first published in 1966).

Throughout the trilogy, H. Stuart Hughes's technique has been that of linking with some general remarks a series of studies of individual thinkers in aspects of their work—Durkheim, Pareto, Croce, Sorel, Bergson, Freud, Jung, Dilthey, Meinecke, Mosca, Michels, Gide, Thomas Mann, Hesse, Proust, Pirandello and others in the first volume, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, Maritain, Gabriel Marcel, Bernanos, Saint-Exupéry, Malraux, Charles de Gaulle, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Camus, Teilhard de Chardin, Lévi-Strauss and others in the second. Literary figures throughout are seen as important expressions of and contributors to the thinking of an age. Professor Hughes, of course, does seek to characterize trends or tensions, but almost always in rather personal, attitudinal, terms.

The Sea Change is the most practised and urbane book of the three, but not the most interesting. It is knowledgeable, competent, judicious, clearly written, intelligent and, in some ways, rather too bland. It belongs to the class—at least to the better class—of histories that arise out of or lend themselves to general courses on great periods or great movements of thought. Thinkers are given their due: the author's idiosyncrasies, aggressively passionate convictions of what is important and what is not important, intellectual agonies and doubts, difficulties and uncertainties (if they exist) are not allowed to complicate the issue or detract from the "civilized" tone of the exercise. The sense of uncommitted urbanity, indeed, is heightened by the fact that Professor Hughes knows or knows personally so many of his protagonists. Did that enter, or distort, his criteria of selection ?

The main substance of the book begins with "A philosophical prologue in England"—an account of Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy seen as a product of his character and of his life in Vienna and Cambridge. It is an account that summarizes neatly but without any particularly fresh insight or skill the story made familiar by Norman Malcolm, David Pears, Janik and Toulmin and others. It ignores the recent biographical interest in Wittgenstein's view of the Soviet Union and *communism. The selection of* Wittgenstein, instead of a thinker like Popper, makes clear Professor Hughes's preference for a particular type of Continental thought, and a particular type of intellectual appeal: that which evinces the disillusionment with "positivism" which formed the theme of his *Consciousness and Society*. The book goes on, in a genetic account of the émigré critique of fascism, assessing the early attempts of Borgese, Mannheim and Fromm, summarizing succinctly the work of Salvemini and Franz Neumann—with which Hughes has the most sympathy—and then dismissing, by way of Hannah Arendt, the attempt to see fascism as a form of totalitarianism.

The chapter on fascism, given Professor Hughes's knowledge and interests, should have been the best in the book : the concluding pages in which Hughes reviews more recent work on fascism—an opportunity for tough-minded judgment and analysis—opt once again for a rather bland, judicious, general appraisal in which sense triumphs *over sensibility and caution over* intellectual excitement.

In fact, it is the next chapter, devoted to the critique of the mass society and the work of the Frankfurt School in America, which is the best chapter in the book : a good, brief initial introduction to the *concerns and thought of Adorno*, Horkheimer and Marcuse—a little oversympathetic, perhaps, certainly not critical, except of the later Fromm (no one deserves credit for that); but clear and accurate as far as it goes. Then follows a study of the transformation of Freudianism into ego psychology, which concentrates on the work of Heinz Hartmann and Erik Erikson (for whom Hughes, as a competent historian, obviously has somewhat less respect). This again is a clear and useful account, not entirely conventional, of important developments out of the womb of Freudian psychology, but Hughes's attempts to relate these changes to the American social climate ring false and unconvincing like his discussion of their relation to Freud's work is stronger on questions of emotional attitude and literary style than on the vigorous examination of concepts and conceptual implications. This, indeed, is true of the whole book.

The final chapter is entitled "Conclusion : The Sea Change" and the one thing it does not do is to relate the wealth of interesting material in Professor Hughes's book with the question of migration and its effects. Instead he tells us rather competently and well about Thomas Mann's final attitudes to Germany by analysing his *Doctor Faustus* and contrasts this with Hannah Arendt's discovery in *Eichmann* that the key to the Nazi period lay in banality.

The uncomfortable truth that the *new Germany of the middle-class* philistine built by Adenauer might be much stuffier than Weimar, but was therefore far less disquieting, is a conclusion that Professor Hughes himself is forced to draw—but he shirks completely its implications for social thought. If he did not, he would have written more excitingly on fascism and less conventionally on the Cold War or the role of transcendence, of utopian ideals, in society. He might then have referred to the strains of émigré thought represented by such figures as Franz Borkenau, Karl Popper and Eric Voegelin and Wittfogel —all of them, in their different ways, much more tough-minded social thinkers than those Hughes is at home with in this book ; or he might have backed up his warm personal reference to the late George Lichtheim with a close of the latter's willingness to judge in the face of *contemporary fashion*.

Instead, we have before us a high-level, sustained and developed version of the smooth, often knowledgeable and far from incompetent articles that *Time* or *Newsweek* devote to the "great thinkers" of our age. Professor Hughes's book is the stuff of which they are made.



"Les Kulturreaeger" en Pologne, with various icons and the works of Marx and Hitler in their baggage. This watercolour, pen and black ink drawing by Arthur Szyk (dated 1939), is in Christie's sale of nineteenth-century and modern paintings on Friday, April 1.

Peruvian polemic

By George Philip

PEDRO G. BELTRAN :
La verdadera realidad peruana
252pp. Madrid : Editorial San Martin.

The name of Pedro Beltrán is well known in Peruvian politics. As a former prime minister and editor of *La Prensa*, he has been extremely forthright in putting forward his political views. These are liberal in the classical sense—favouring political democracy and economic laissez-faire. It is not surprising, therefore, that he is fundamentally opposed (on both of these grounds) to Peru's current military regime. Since the latter, having first censored the daily press, subsequently decided to nationalize it, Sr Beltrán has found it *necessary* to resort to book form in order to publicize his views. As one might expect, he has written an entertaining and skilful anti-regime polemic which, now that the political pendulum appears to be swinging in Peru, may well play its part in influencing the course of future events.

Inevitably a book of this kind contains some exaggerations ; the Peruvian military government, for example, is considerably less repressive than many others in Latin America although one would not gather this from the text. Similarly, while the Peruvian economy (and especially agriculture) is in serious trouble, this cannot be blamed entirely on the government ; serious long-term problems and the recent world recession have also played their part. Nevertheless, some criticisms do strike home very effectively. Sr Beltrán's scepticism about the government's various experiments in "community" property appears *justified*, as does his criticism of the government's only recently abandoned policy of indiscriminate subsidization of food, petrol and other urban consumer goods.

Sr Beltrán is at his most convincing, however, in his attack on the government's press seizure of July 1974. Indeed, with the benefit of hindsight, this appears to have been the government's greatest blunder (as well as its most naked exhibition of authoritarianism). Not only did it decisively alienate much of Lima's middle class (and trigger off riots in the most affluent suburbs), but the problems of managing the newly nationalized newspapers have also seriously exacerbated the regime's internal problems, which seem to be steadily worsening. Ironically, the conservative opposition is almost certainly stronger now than it would have been had the *nationalization never taken place.*

Overall, therefore, *La verdadera realidad peruana* is interesting and well written. Perhaps its most serious shortcoming lies in what it does not say. There is no sustained discussion of how a regime which the author detests could have come to power *in the first place.* While the answer to this is inevitably complicated, a large part of the reason is that many civilians (including much of the present opposition) eagerly called for military intervention whenever it suited their own short-term interests to do so. If civilian government is ever to succeed in Peru, it requires a far more conciliatory attitude among civilian politicians than has existed up to now. It is to be hoped that the desire of Sr Beltrán and many other Peruvians for the reestablishment of democracy will not quickly evaporate should their campaign prove successful.

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Signal victories

By Peter Gretton

PATRICK BEESLY :
Very Special Intelligence
The Story of the Admiralty's Operational Intelligence Centre 1939-45
286pp. Hamish Hamilton. £5.95.

Patrick Beesly has been lucky. He is the first author to be able to take advantage of the recent official relaxation of records of "special intelligence" or the cracking of German cyphers and codes. In contrast with those books in this field which rely on memory or guesses and rumours, this one depends on recorded facts, and the result is a fascinating study, with which two distinguished historians, Stephen Roskill and Peter Kemp, have cooperated. Mr Beesly was himself a member of the Admiralty's Operational Intelligence Centre, and is thus well qualified to describe its achievements.

It would be wrong to consider special intelligence (now often known as Ultra), which was produced at Bletchley Park by a devoted and brilliant team, as the sole or even the most important contribution of the OIC. Studies of patterns of W/T traffic, agents' reports, interrogation of POWs, the direction-finding W/T organization and of course photographic reconnaissance, were all used to warn the naval staff of pending operations. Photographic intelligence, owing to a lack of appreciation of its importance by the RAF, only *became effective in the spring of* 1940 and the first photo of Kiel was received on April 7, too late to give warning of the Norwegian invasion. Naval special intelligence was not produced by Bletchley Park until May 1941, as a result of the capture of a U-boat with its Enigma cypher machine and attendant papers intact ; whereas army and air force signals were decoded earlier. The German Navy was always more security conscious and defeated the cryptanalysts for long periods. There is an interesting description of the Enigma machine and of the many different cyphers which it could handle, not all of which were broken. The cypher used by surface raiders was never decrypted, for example, and when special intelligence was used to sink a *raider, it was gleaned from the* U-boats with which the raider was working.

The author skilfully describes the development of the OIC and shows how the mistakes of Room 40 in 1914-18 were avoided. Every story has a hero and this one has two. The first was Commander Denning, who established the set-up ; after a period of study of Italian submarines in the Spanish Civil War, he became the expert on German surface vessel operations. The other hero, who has received more publicity, was Rodger Winn, then a barrister, who acquired a flair for interpreting U-boat operations. The author quotes many of his appreciations of future U-boat plans verbatim and the accuracy of the forecasts is uncanny. The navy was indeed lucky to have two such men in their Intelligence organization. Particularly when special intelligence was being provided *promptly and regularly, the most* important operational decisions were taken in the OIC and the author gives many examples.

It should not be forgotten that B. Dienst, the German naval cryptanalyst organization, had complete success in breaking the British cyphers from the start of the war until June 1940. This situation arose from a combination of conservatism and complacency, and it is of interest that it was Winn who first suspected the German successes and persuaded the signalmen to change their cyphers.

On the German side, there was *complacency as well, and two major* enquiries set up to examine the security of the cyphers came to the conclusion that they were impossible to read and that British successes so far must be due to treachery and a good direction-finding organization. Chapters are devoted to all the major actions in home waters and the Atlantic and the author is able to supplement the official history by making clear the impact of special intelligence on major events and on the U-boat campaign. He makes clear, for instance, that the sinking of the Bismarck, contrary to recent accounts, was achieved with little recourse to special intelligence and that direction-finding was the main factor in tracking the battleship's movements. Special intelligence contributed *much to the sinking of the Scharn*horst, however, and the neglect of advice based on its information led directly to the unnecessary tragedy of convoy PQ17. The OIC produced an accurate forecast of the likely route taken by the Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau in the Channel dash of February 1942, though it was thought that the ships would leave Brest in daylight. Special intelligence quickly reported that the ships had been damaged by mines during the passage, however.

I found the most fascinating part of *Very Special Intelligence* the description of the U-boat tracking *room and its successes and difficulties. From May 1941 it accumu*lated a clear picture of the U-boat situation, and even tracked individual boats for complete cruises. Then on February 1, 1942, the Germans introduced a new cypher which defeated Bletchley Park until mid-December. But during the period of blackout, Winn's experience and flair managed to pinpoint the position of the majority of the U-boats at sea, using all other sources of information. Again, during the crisis of the Battle of the Atlantic in the spring of 1943, when large numbers of boats were at sea, the cryptanalysts were temporarily defeated by a change in the Enigma machine, which by brilliant work was defeated in a matter of weeks. But in the meantime losses were high. Then came victory, with enormous losses to the 126 boats in the North Atlantic. A few operations are well *described and contemporary records* show that the Tracking Room never shared the naval staff's pessimism over the outcome. Winn accurately forecast the return of the U-boats to the North Atlantic in the autumn of 1943, and such was his grip that he often knew more about their movements than did Dönitz. This book is an indispensable aid to any student of naval operations in the Second World War and should act as an appendix to the official histories. It is clear and well presented. I hope that something similar will be attempted for the Mediterranean and Far Eastern theatres.

In an eastern market

By Hugh Tinker

MICHAEL LIPTON and JOHN FIRN :
The Erosion of a Relationship : India and Britain Since 1960
427pp. Oxford University Press. £13.

What do Britain and India mean to each other in the 1970s ? Job Charnock founded in 1686 the tiny English settlement on the Hughli River *which was to be Calcutta.* In its heyday, two centuries later, Kipling records his traveller as exclaiming, "Why, this is London ! This is the docks. This is Imperial. This is worth coming across India to see." Today, most of the British in Calcutta lie buried in the cemeteries ; beneath the gigantesque obelisks and pyramids of Park Street cemetery and the nineteenth-century Gothic memorials of Lower Circular Road. The Addhterlony monument, Calcutta's answer to Nelson's column, has been re-dedicated to the Indian freedom fighters. Streets have been renamed in honour of Lenin and Ho Chi Minh and heroes of the Bengal revolutionary resistance. Yet Clive Row, Outram Ghat, Dufferin Road, and a dozen others, still retain their old names. Surely, somewhere, the old Calcutta of the Burra Sahibs must linger on ? If we are invited into the Bengal Club, once the Athenaeum and Carlton Club *combined*, we find the surroundings much as the British left them. Portraits of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip look down in some puzzlement. *The Times*, the *Illustrated London News* and the *New Statesman* are on hand. But the club members are all Marwari industrialists and financiers (still not quite at ease) and the only occasional British face belongs to a visiting salesman, soon disappearing to drum up trade farther along the line.

In 1914 India was the largest customer in the world for British exports ; in 1975 the republic of India accounted for only 0.8 per cent of Britain's overseas sales (*though even twenty years ago India* was still taking over 6 per cent of Britain's exports). The 1960s were the decade in which the business started to go bad, Inchcape and Company dwindled and almost expired. And yet, today, in the disposal of British overseas aid, 29 per cent goes to India. Something remains : yet is it much more than the lingering smile of the departed Cheshire cat ? To answer these questions Michael Lipton and John Firn, two well-known development economists, have written a large and closely argued book, the text supported by over 100 pages of statistics in close-order columns.

The main thrust of *The Erosion of a Relationship* is to examine commercial and industrial activity, which, since 1947, has been the most important area of interchange. They demonstrate that the British decline set in long before Independence with the rise of an industrial sector in India : after 1947 the process merely accelerated. Yet the decline need not have been so marked if the political interests of the two countries had not increasingly diverged. India took out an insurance policy against the supposed menace of China by building up an intimate relationship with the Soviet Union which virtually replaced the old tie-up with Britain, whose own fitful quest for a closer link with Western Europe eventually ended in EEC membership. India's relinquishment of ties with Britain may be seen as deliberate ; there was nothing deliberate about Britain's withdrawal, which ran counter to most of the rhetoric about Commonwealth partnership.

How far was Britain's change of mood to be ascribed to the arrival of half a million immigrants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in our English cities and towns ? It all seemed to come as a shock to Britain's planners, civil servants and politicians : though the immigration was willed by the manpower demands of British industry, public transport and the health services. The authors devote half a chapter to this migration. They do not adequately explore the dimensions of this unprecedented shift of the East into the West which leaves Britain carrying on a relationship with India that cannot be eroded, whoever may wish to do so. Sourness has crept in on both sides, and may in time create the syndrome which grips white and black in America.

Professor Lipton is a dedicated *Indophile and he continues to look* for ongoing trends which sustain the two countries' mutual interests in such fields as higher education and technical assistance. He argues persuasively that India provides a "Brain Gain" to Britain. In estimating the cost to India of training the doctors who come to work in *British hospitals he calculates that* India donates the equivalent of over £5 million per year to this country as the cost of its trained manpower.

The book contains a wealth of quantified, documented evidence and it will provide a valuable work of reference for everyone trying to *analyse contemporary Indo-British* problems. Professor Lipton believes that the process of erosion can and should be halted. Yet since this book was researched and written at the beginning of the 1970s the process of attrition has gone much further. If earnest argument and careful presentation of data can influence events then this book should cause many in Britain and India to pause and think again.

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The time and the place

By Vernon Scannell

EDWIN BROCK :
Here. Now. Always.
153pp. £3.90.

Song of the Battery Hen
Selected Poems 1959-1975
105pp. £3.50.
Secker and Warburg.

Here. Now. Always. is a rather odd, frequently moving and almost always diverting book which tells the story of its author's life from childhood in working-class South London through wartime adolescence into young maturity, service as a motor-lot in the Royal Navy and as a Metropolitan Police constable, to a marriage which seems to have generated more anguish and frustration than it could for long support. Edwin Brock has elected to use both prose and verse in his narrative which is episodic and fragmented, though not lacking in unity, as one perceives at the end when the pieces slot into place to reveal a balanced, sombrely tinted portrait of a particular man in a particular place and time.

Much quotidian detail has been omitted for the sake of sharpness and economy, but the events recorded have clearly been chosen, or perhaps have themselves insisted on being chosen, because they provide in their different ways clues to the enigma of the man's life and personality and their interrelation.

The prose is mainly admirable, supple and sinewy, having little truck with metaphor and abstractions but focusing sharply on the objects themselves, the tastes, sounds, sights and smells of childhood, evoking, too, that prepubescent sense of mystery, fear and excitement that, much later, we realize must have been breathed by the twin presences of sexuality and mortality, Eros and Thanatos.

Brock is unusually skilful at evading the pitfalls of writing about adolescent sex, those clichés of situation and phrase that are so difficult to avoid without falsification, and he manages to brew an authentic mixture of squalor and lyricism, guilt and pleasure, without sentimentality or condescension. Interestingly, the prose falters only on the few occasions when Brock decides to write "poetically", when he strains after the image or conceit, as in the account of his father's death when, aged ten, he goes home late to Granny Brock's house, to which he has been sent after his father's mortal accident, to find the adults waiting for him with the dread news. "Their staring", writes Brock, "is like five screams", and the convincing and effecting structure of realism that he has put together trembles and comes close to collapse.

I am not persuaded that the method of following each prose account of a key experience by a poem inspired by the same event or events is justified by the results, and I was disturbed to notice that the effectiveness of the best of the prose sometimes highlighted what seemed like the comparative stridency and affectation of the verse as when, for instance, a good prose description of the Blitz, literal and exact, is followed by

> Six barrage balloons are
> chewing the sky's cud, and
> we are in love with
> their uniformed milkmaids :
> this is our war.

I would not blame any reader for saying, "The balloons are doing *what*?" and then deciding to skip the poetry stuff to get on with the story. It would be a pity if anyone were put off the book by the interruptions and the repetitions of the verse and a much greater pity if he were put off poetry itself as being something more pretentious, vaguer, more generalized and boring than prose, and I am afraid that this could easily happen.

The fact is that the reading of a poem is a different operation from the reading of prose and it asks a different kind of attention from the reader, a reorganization of responses repaid in a different currency, and Brock, in *Here. Now. Always.*, runs a grave risk of selling short his achievement in both modes of expression. Fortunately we have the simultaneous publication of *Song of the Battery Hen : Selected Poems 1959-1975* to facilitate a clearer view of the poetry.

The first thing that impresses is the consistency of tone, quality and readability of these poems. Right from the start Brock seems to be very much his own man. There may be a few echoes of Dylan Thomas in the language of a few of the earlier pieces, and of Peter Porter in the later—though this might well be a coincidence of temperament, age and the fact that they have both been advertising *copywriters and their differences*, as poets, are more marked than any faint similarity—but Brock's voice and poetic persona are quickly established and sustained with assurance.

He is the spokesman of the rough, uncultivated but spiritually hungry, the hard case with a heart that refuses to ossify. He suffers but he is resolved to survive. And the danger with this stance is that it tends to produce a note of self-pity that is as less attractive for being jauntily or profanely voiced:

> ... well, I've fixed that lot
> now where the fuckinell
> do I go ?

At his best, however, when he keeps the over-obtrusive first person singular in the background, and trusts the objects themselves to carry the emotion he makes a poetry which is personal in the best sense, honest, passionate and inimitable. Neither of these books is a cosy read and each is very much its author's creature: questioning, unsure, aggressive, obstinately hopeful and never dull.

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Brief encounters

By D. A. N. Jones

DIRK BOGARDE :
A Postillion Struck by Lightning
268pp. Chatto and Windus. £4.95.

The title is rather dowdy, for a film-star's memoirs. It has not the appeal of David Niven's *Bring on the Empty Horses*. But this is a very different sort of book, deliberately avoiding humorous anecdotes and name-dropping. Dirk Bogarde has attempted to present certain episodes in his life as chapters in a poetic novel, and one often suspects that he has bent the facts towards fiction. He writes "Part One is a condensation of at least two summers, but Part Two is 'as it was' to the best of my recollection." He plays with the image of "a postillion struck by lightning", and claims that his nursemaid's friend actually owned and used the old phrase-book in which the sentence occurred.

The index is indicative. Entries include "Meiselwitch, Tanya, (unnamed) 215-9" and "Woolf, Virginia (unnamed), 113-5". Look up the reference to Virginia Woolf, and you find that she is the lonely, creepy lady who disturbed the boy Bogarde and his friends as they were flailing in a Sussex river : they rejected her friendly advances and wondered, after she had gone, why there were so many witches in Sussex. This seems the opposite of game-dropping. Bogarde wants the lonely woman as an image, for poetic purposes, and her name is unimportant, tucked casually into this odd index.

> "Londoner. From over there at Rodmell", said Perce, skewering the biggest grasshopper on to his hook. "They say she's a bit dotty, lately. She writes books."

Perhaps, though, he is being craftily throwaway. He will introduce a friend of his youth, tell a story relevant to his narrative, and then slip in, so casually the friend's famous name, Scofield or Ustinov. Leaving a repertory company and invited to come back again, he writes :

> It was a little over six years later that I took her up on her generous offer. On demob leave, in my worn service dress, a reasonable row of campaign medals on my chest, three pips on my shoulders and ten shillings in my pocket, I stood in a line of elderly women whom the vile interviewing for charlaidies.

That is absolutely representative of his style. Sentences begin with a casual statement, proceed through a subordinate clause to a final statement which is not quite a conclusion, but which leads on to the next sentence. Bogarde is very fond of his childhood memories, and has attempted to re-create its atmosphere at his home in rural France. He refers to Christopher Robin and to the William books, aware that he is himself indulging in the artificially sweet-tempered sentiment of such books, or Enid Blyton's, come to that. But his account of his idyllic life has its sour moments—the meanness and selfishness of children, their ruthless and wounding behaviour, as well as their charm and joy. The whole section is admirably balanced and convincing.

In the second part, the boy is separated from his family and sent from sunny Sussex to a fearful technical school in Glasgow. The grayness of the misery is splashed with more lurid colours when he selects two particularly horrible episodes, a school bullying and an encounter with a sadistic pederast. He contrasts with quite a long argument to the effect that the Glasgow experience was good for him : it encouraged him to accept loneliness and to build a wall around himself. His melancholy stoicism, he suggests, is connected with the clear, elegant sketches with which he has illustrated his book are of unpeopled landscapes.

Selective as ever, he deals with his film career in one impressionistic chapter, one chosen "scene". He is being dressed up as Franz Liszt and ordered to learn to play the piano. But the whole book is, indirectly, relevant to his acting career, especially for anyone who has seen him on stage, when the charming good-looking "juve" suddenly becomes a bruised victim, as I saw him once in an Anouilh play. Summery Sussex and wintry Glasgow have clashed and blended too throughout his cinema career, as he has swung between very many comedy and more "serious" roles —serious meaning, sometimes, really morbid.

> "We authors, Ma'am", Disraeli was accustomed to begin when he talked to Queen Victoria about books ; for she published not only her account of *Our Life in the Highlands* but two extracts from her assiduously kept journal, those covering the visit of Napoleon III and his Empress Eugénie in 1855 and her own return visit later that year. They appeared in a volume printed "for strictly private circulation only" in 1880 and published for the first time in 1967 (the year reissued in Queen Victoria's Travels from Journal, 1862-5 (Hamish Hamilton, £4.95). The book is introduced by Raymond Mortimer and illustrated with [illegible] reproductions and photographs [illegible]

The cruise of the biblionauts

By A. R. A. Hobson

LEONA ROSTENBERG and MADELEINE B. STERN :
Old & Rare
Thirty Years in the Book Business
234pp. George Prior. £5.50.

Leona Rostenberg and Madeleine B. Stern are the partners of "Leona Rostenberg—Rare Books", a New York firm of antiquarian booksellers that issued its first catalogue in 1946. They have specialized in books concerning the Renaissance and Reformation, without overlooking *the potential profit in Charles T. Jackson's Second Report of the Geology of the State of Maine*, 1838.

Most of their stock was bought on annual journeys to Europe. They paid their respects to the great E. Ph. Goldschmidt in his smoke-filled office on the first floor of 45 Old Bond Street, were enjoined by Miss Hamel of Grafton's, "You can buy the books, gels, but don't touch them!" and lunched with the proprietor of Elkin Matthews Ltd at Bishop's Stortford, a visit which left them with the impression (which they could have corrected from Percy Muir's *Minding my own Business*) that their host had been sent to Russia in 1928 by the British Government to buy two royal libraries. England indeed offered ample scope for misunderstanding. On the way from Southampton to London in 1947 they noticed a sign, "You are now entering the Strong country", and felt an agreeable flutter of astonishment and superiority at the incongruousness of the boast. Much of their time was spent in booksellers' basements searching for "sleepers"—the trade term for books whose value the buyer understands better than the seller. But hard work in dingy surroundings did not destroy their romantic view of the Old World. Emerging to dine at the Cumberland Hotel they saw the restaurant filled with "monocled Britishers . . . manipulating their fish forks with languid elegance"—a vision whose U and non-U nuances are almost too involved to contemplate.

They bought pamphlets from the erudite Michel Bernstein in Paris, a collection of plays from Hoepli in Milan, and in Florence were entertained by the charming Cesare Olschki. Their attitude to these European expeditions is rather that of travellers in Amazonia. The jungles round are full of unknown perils, indicated by untoward dishes or sundaes at Schraffts, they suffer "the difficulties of an overwrought gut" in Holland. Rock-like French bonbons remove "the artificial molar of a back bridge". In Vienna the junior partner is pressed screaming by Mr Norman, and at times the "two-biblionauts' translating-set jams and convulsed fragments of the natives' speech [illegible] in the headphones. "Ist was los ? Pas assez pourboire, eh, big fiocco ?" The experience seems to have left Miss Rostenberg an impenitent triglot with a taste for the occasional superlative comparative. For her, she declares, her partner will always be "seniorissima".

What are the rewards of these arduous adventures ? First, the visitors, still tossed about surprise, are lovingly suspended in a trade dominated by men, in spite of the gloomy predictions of Miss Rostenberg's tutor at Columbia, Lynn Thorndike, and her first employer, Herbert Putnam. Second, their recollections of European booksellers. The pen-portraits they draw in *Old & Rare* are short and superficial, but lively and often acid. Finally there is the satisfaction, in Voltaire's words which they quote, of having dug "some precious monuments from under the ruins of ages". Their picture of the post-war rare book trade is entertaining, if subjective and not always accurate. But for a truer impression of "Leona Rostenberg —Rare Books" the reader should consult the firm's catalogues, the first of which was praised by that discriminating judge, the late William A. Jackson, Harvard's Grand Accumulator.

The mirror of England

By Cecil Parrott

OTAKAR VOCADLO :
Anglické Listy Karla Capka
(Karel Čapek's "Letters from England")
372pp. Prague : Academia.

Otakar Vočadlo, for many years the leading Czech authority on English and American literature, and probably the most eminent pupil of the distinguished founder of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Vilém Mathesius, first came to England in 1921 at the age of twenty-five as a post-graduate at the University of London. He was to stay six years there as a lecturer at the School of Slavonic Studies and a further three at *Cambridge University*.

After his return home in 1930 he enjoyed some ten years only of active academic life as professor of English literature, first at Bratislava and then at Prague, before he was seized by the Nazis and dragged off to Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Released in 1945, he was invited to King's College, Cambridge, to recuperate as their guest. After spending three years as professor at the Charles University, he was dismissed by the communist government and ostracized for some fifteen years, during which he was held practically incommunicado : it is said that no books could reach him from abroad unless marked in Czech "Shakespeare's Works". When he was finally released in the "thaw" of the mid-1960s, King's invited him to come and convalesce a second time. He was fully rehabilitated in 1968 at the age of seventy-three only to suffer again under the restrictions and discriminations reintroduced by the post-Dubček government. He was permitted to publish a final book, but died in 1971 *before it could appear in print*. Thus a man of exceptional ability, vigour and devotion to the cause of Anglo-Czechoslovak relations was granted only some thirteen years of freedom in his own country in which to exercise his talents. In view of this his achievements are signal. In addition to teaching, lecturing and writing numerous learned articles he published, among other works, *English Literature in the 20th Century*, *England and Bohemia* and *Contemporary Literature in the United States*. But they all date from the early 1930s.

Vočadlo's *Anglické Listy Karla Čapka* (Karel Čapek's "Letters from England") was published posthumously at the end of 1975, when he would have been eighty. It is not, as one might suppose from the title, an analysis of Čapek's popular book, but an account of the historic journey which gave birth to it—Čapek's one and only visit to England in 1924. In it Vočadlo tells how in 1921 Čapek, who was his senior by eight years, was put in charge of the repertoire at the Vinohrady theatre, which, as the chief municipal theatre in Prague, was second only to the National. It was proof of the young author's faith in English literature and drama that he immediately wrote to the legation in London asking them to help him get a list of plays in the wartime and current repertoire. English drama had been so neglected in Prague that he wanted to include in his coming programme as many English pieces as he could.

The legation turned first to Paul Selver, their official translator, who already had some translations from Czech literature to his credit, but, as Vočadlo puts it a trifle mischievously, "since he had no interest in undertaking work which *was not remunerated*", *the request* was providentially passed to Vočadlo himself, who was by nature, though not by profession, a cultural attaché of genius. It would not surprise anyone who knew him to find that he took the assignment very seriously indeed and spent the evenings of the next few weeks attending almost every theatrical performance in London from *Chu Chin Chow* to *Bulldog Drummond* and the afternoons in the British Museum reading the texts of plays which had been running during the war. Thanks to Vočadlo's help *Čapek was able to put on five* English plays in Prague during the eighteen months when he was in charge of the theatre. He was also inspired to produce Shelley's *The Cenci*, anticipating by six weeks its first British public performance at the New Theatre with Sybil Thorndike. He planned too to publish a theatre newspaper and bombarded Vočadlo with requests for contributions about British cultural life for this as well as for *Lidové noviny*, of which he was an editor, and which was to become the *Guardian* of Czechoslovakia. He *was also preparing to publish* an "Anglo-American Library"—a series of translations into Czech of the best books of English and American literature, for which he eventually secured Vočadlo as editor. Vočadlo in turn was anxious for Čapek to set up a branch of the PEN Club in Prague and it was by persuading the British PEN Club to invite him as their guest at the forthcoming international meeting in London that he manoeuvred Čapek into coming to London, for which he had initially little enthusiasm.

Čapek irritated Vočadlo a good deal by the obstacles he raised. He seems at first to have underestimated the scope and importance of the PEN Club, which he insisted on referring to as a *klubek* (a little club). Next he made difficulties about accepting PEN Club hospitality and allowing them to pay his fares. He finally ended on postponing his visit until he could go over and report the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley for his newspaper. Then there was the problem of dress. He would bring tails with him, but did he have to pack a dinner jacket as well ? When Vočadlo said he must, he did so after many grumbles, only to find, when he arrived, that the dinner at which he was to be guest of honour had been changed to a lunch, because the Queen of Romania happened to be in London and had asked for an invitation. The PEN Club apologized and explained that the queen was a writer and honorary president of the Romanian PEN Club so she must be a guest too. Because she was royalty, the prescribed dress would have to be morning coat. This was, of course, the one garment Čapek had not brought with him and he had to go out and buy one. An unfortunate casualty of the change of plan was H. G. Wells, whom Čapek wanted to meet more than anybody else except Chesterton, but who refused to sit at the same table with royalty. However, the lunch went well. Čapek had on the one side his favourite Chesterton and on the other the Queen of Romania's sister, the lively and witty Infante Beatrice, who could understand some Czech as she had been in Slovakia. Čapek even presented her with a toy robot, which was being sold in London by street vendors, because *RUR* was all the rage. But she was not to know that he detested robots !

During the visit the writer and his guide proved to be of widely differing character and temperament. Vočadlo was a great patriot and fervent nationalist—almost too much of one for Čapek, who was *only too conscious* that to show excessive nationalism in England would be regarded as "bad form". While Vočadlo would deny that Vienna had given anything to Prague except *Wiener Walzer* and *Wiener Wurst*, Čapek as a boy in Brno had gone clandestinely with his sister to the German library to borrow books and translations. If the unpolitical Čapek could be described as a liberal, Vočadlo was a good deal further to the left. He was in Čapek's eyes something of a firebrand too, which he jokingly attributed to his vegetarian diet. "You vegetarians are much more bloodthirsty than us carnivores", he told him playfully. Vočadlo was energetic and assertive, Čapek easy-going and conciliatory. He soon began to wilt under the strain of all the engagements which his guide had arranged for him. To judge from the pitiful letters he wrote to his future wife, Olga, he felt like a fish out of water.

He was less interested in the monuments, cathedrals and battlefields which Vočadlo wanted to show him than in the everyday life of the people. But he liked people in small doses, hating crowds and preferring the quiet of the park to the roar of the streets. Although he is regarded in Czechoslovakia as the interpreter of Britain *par excellence*—so much so that if Czechs come here and find it is not as he had depicted it they are disappointed, there was so much he did not understand and did not really approve of, that one is surprised that he managed to write the attractive book he did, although some of his phobias come out in it. He hated the drab uniformity of the suburbs, shuddered at the excess of wealth everywhere and complained that at the British Empire Exhibition no attention was paid to native culture ; whether it was made in Bermuda, Fiji, South Africa, or British Guiana, everything was in the same European mould.

And there was so much in England he still could not understand. When he was asked to dinner with Rebecca West, why should H. G. Wells open the front door ? And when he was invited to stay for a weekend in the country with Wells, *why did he have to pack a dinner* jacket ? "In the country, said Wells a Socialist ?" he asked. Nor could he understand how Wells the visionary of the future, could live in an antique cottage in a "dorelict" part of the country. When he arrived at the cottage, Mrs Wells with consummate tact tipped the guests off not to dress. None the less Wells himself could not resist adorning himself in his velvet dinner jacket (which Čapek has sketched him in). Still more baffling for him was the appearance there of the mistress of Warwick. Wells did not seem to mind having "King Edward VII's mistress" (of Marlenbad fame !) at his table provided she was a socialist.

Čapek had good reason to be unhappy about the way his works were being handled in England. British publishers paid much lower royalties than those on the Continent. His books and plays were poorly translated, too. Vočadlo fought a running war with Selver, whom he accused of feathering his own nest at the expense of Čapek. He had allegedly carried it to the point of suppressing Čapek's name on the title page of *RUR* so that the *Observer* was driven to ask "Is there a Karel Čapek ?". He also committed crass howlers in his translations of some books, and sat on others so as to prevent them being translated by those who might have made a better job of it. Even the ever-forgiving Čapek was pained when in *Letters from England* Selver turned "elk dung" into "the excrement of the wild salmon" and referred to Robert Seton-Watson's young wife as an "aged lady". But Selver can perhaps be partly excused ; as Skye there were no elks, and Čapek had been misinformed.

But it must be conceded that Čapek was often his own enemy. In spite of all Vočadlo's justified remonstrances he let Selver get away with it. And he was a bad salesman of his own works, of which he spoke not just modestly but often disparagingly. When he took Romain Rolland to see *RUR* in Prague he kept on saying to him : "This is stupid. . . . This is stupid. Doesn't it bore you ? It bores *me* frightfully." Rolland's review of the play was understandably unenthusiastic. But we must give credit to Čapek for his honesty, because the play had probably been overpraised.

Čapek was very happy staying with the Vočadlos in Surbiton, but he partied company with them for part of the time and took a room in Ladbroke Grove with the Czech widow of a London policeman, partly to be on his own and partly because of his admiration for Chesterton's *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*. Also when he went to Oxford and Vočadlo did not accompany him, he took the opportunity to go around on his own and avoided the contacts suggested to him.

And yet in spite of all his asides to Olga that he was much happier when he went to Italy, he certainly did enjoy those crowded six weeks very much indeed. His letters to her from Italy do almost as unhappy as those he sent her from England. And it was certainly an inestimable benefit to him to have Vočadlo as a guide, because whenever he decided to do the piloting himself they found themselves right off the map—once in the Caledonian Market instead of at the Caledonian Club !

Our writers were very hospitable to Čapek and paid him every honour and attention. Shaw had him to lunch and played Mozart to him on the spinet and the Galsworthys entertained him. Both Chesterton and Shaw came to a discussion held after the performance of *RUR*, at which Shaw told his audience that it was *they* who were taken because they never thought for themselves but took their ideas from the papers they read. Alas, all Čapek's efforts to persuade Shaw or Chesterton to go to Prague for the Czechoslovak PEN Club failed. They "preferred other climes" and Chesterton even turned traitor, siding with Poland and publishing an anti-Czech article in his paper, which was too much even for the conciliatory Čapek. But Wells and Galsworthy were faithful and came.

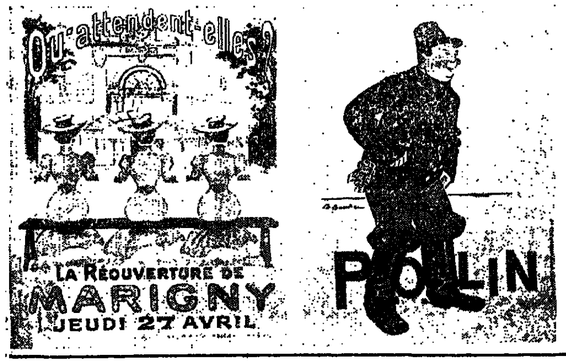
In spite of some disappointments Čapek remained all his life a devoted admirer of Britain, and this was one of the reasons why the Munich Agreement came as a death blow to him. He died on Christmas Day, 1938, less than three months after its signature, in the intervening period he had suffered much from the revilement of Czech "appeasers".

Vočadlo's book, which radiates love of Britain and is immensely well informed about it, is heartening to read today, particularly as it recalls a chapter in Anglo-Czech cultural relations when they were close, and unencumbered by political obstacles. There is no doubt that during the years from 1921 to 1929 Vočadlo, with his unrivalled knowledge of English and American literature, and his indefatigable enthusiasm, was the right man in the right place, where he was ably supported by his wife, Ludmila, the translator of Shaw, Wells and Arnold Bennett. Karel Čapek found many times acknowledged his own debt to English literature and thought. "As far as outside literature is concerned", he wrote in the *Westminster Gazette* in 1925, "my self have been most under the influence of the Anglo-Saxons." His last reading before he died was from the English philosopher, F. H. Bradley, the actress wife Olga was distinguished in her portrayal of Shaw's women. His brother, Josef, to whom he was so close, who was co-author of *The Insect Play* and *Adam the Creator*, and who painted the sets for *The Cenci*, disappeared on his release from Sachsenhausen. Among his few last possessions were found translations of English poetry. Let us honour the Vočadlos and the Čapeks, if only for the sufferings they incurred through honouring us. And let us pay tribute to their honesty : it shines out of the pages of their books.

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Evenings in Paris : posters advertising (left to right) the reopening of the Théâtre Marigny, 1905 ; the Chansonnier Polin, 1913 ; a ballet at the Théâtre National de l'Opéra, 1919 ; and a one-act opéra-bouffe at the Théâtre de l'Opéra Comique, 1930. From Affiches illustrées 1850-1950, *the second volume of* Les Arts du spectacle en France, *edited by Nicole Wild (454pp. Paris : Bibliothèque Nationale), a catalogue of around 2,000 posters for public entertainments—theatres, halls, music-halls and café-concerts.*

The eclectic message

By John Willett

DENIS BABLET :
Les révolutions scéniques du XXe siècle
385pp with 666 illustrations, 97 in colour. Paris: Société Internationale d'Art XXe siècle.

For those interested in modern stage design the great illustrated albums of the past stand like landmarks: Gregor and Fülöp-Miller 1928, Fuerst and Hume 1928, Moussinac 1931, Komisarjovsky and Simonson 1933. And since then? Some of these works have been reprinted, while there have of course been large, splendid books on individual designers and theatres, notably on Picasso, Neher, Karl von Appen and the early work (resumed in *Theaterarbeit*) of the Berliner Ensemble. But the combinations of wide-ranging research (increasingly wide, as the theatre of newly developing countries becomes more significant) with the necessarily lavish and expensive presentation, has become rare in these hard times, and it is good that a book should appear which at last brings us up to date.

Denis Bablet is the author of two earlier works on different aspects of the subject—notably his *Esthétique générale du décor de théâtre de 1870 à 1914*, republished in 1975—as well as monographs on Svoboda and Gordon Craig.

His new book however is at once more comprehensive and much more generously illustrated, with a text more suitable for the general reader. This handsome album owes its existence largely to the late G. di San Lazzaro, who used to edit the art review *XXe Siècle*, but in some measure to Joan Miró, who has provided two full-page lithographs that have no particular bearing on the theme but, by justifying a special *limited edition, help keep the price* of the ordinary edition down. Like its precursors in the genre it is a stout quarto-sized book averaging roughly two illustrations to the page. The offset reproductions are adequately black, with a good sprinkling in colour. There is an index of names and a useful bibliography.

So much for the bare facts; but what emerges? Essentially the story reduces itself to three periods: the Edwardian era, the 1920s and the present confusing age. Prefigured by the productions of Paul Fort and Lugné-Poe, of which unfortunately little or no visual record remains, the first of these established that concept of a painter's theatre which made its lasting impact with Diaghilev and has largely dominated opera and ballet production ever since. At the same time it saw an extremely interesting if less instantly eye-catching reaction in the work of those great frustrated theoreticians, Appia and Craig.

Though both tendencies were forms of revolt against the illusionistic naturalism that constitutes M Bablet's starting point (as seen in Antoine's Zola productions and Stanislavsky's *The Lower Depths*), it is the anti-painter reaction which concerns him the more, and he provides an illuminating selection of illustrations to show how Appia's ideas of lighting and space led, via the Jaques-Dalcroze theatre at Hellerau, to one of the two main threads in German theatrical Expressionism and so forward to Wieland Wagner's Bayreuth productions of the 1950s and 1960s. Meanwhile Craig, whose ideas, for all the beauty of his Moscow *Hamlet*, are more difficult to depict, remains even more oxemplary with his view of theatre as a balanced, interlocked selection of all the different visual and non-visual elements that go to make it up.

It is the 1920s, however, that dominate the book, with the Russians, Germans and other central Europeans now providing the main impetus. The painters' theatre visibly flourishes, above all in cosmopolitan Paris, though there are also some eye-opening examples from Baumeister in Stuttgart and the adaptable, sometimes almost pop-art designer, Lothar Schenck von Trapp at Darmstadt. The highly original researches of Oskar Schlemmer and other Bauhaus artists are well covered, as are Moholy-Nagy's settings for the Kroll Oper, in Berlin, while there are interesting kinetic exercises by Friedrich Kiesler—why did he never develop these further?—and the Italian Futurist Prampolini.

Nothing, however, can quite compare with the great Russian constructivist settings, since these, being designed for outstanding directors like Meyerhold and Tairov, were in no sense fringe products but integral to a whole revolutionary theatre. Thus Lyubov Popova, in M Bablet's Corbusier-like phrase, devised her "machine à jouer" for *The Magnificent Cuckold*; Lissitzky remodelled the auditorium for Tretiakov's unrealized play *I Want a Child*; finally Shuffer and Knoblok at Okhlopkhov's Realistic Theatre explored the different audience/stage relationships possible in "theatre-in-the-round". As for more technical innovations, those can be seen in Piscator's productions of 1927-28 (though perhaps not enough is made of the use of animated film in *Schweik*) and later in E. F. Burian's work in Prague, which looks forward to the Laterna Magica of the 1950s and so to Svoboda's designs.

Such, in outline, are the "révolutions scéniques" which the modern theatre is still digesting. But, as the author says: "Combien de créations aujourd'hui en retrouvent l'esprit sans pouvoir en renouveler l'aventure!" Here is the crux of it. In our present period, which M Bablet dates from the end of the Second World War, designers no longer seem to be exploring and making fresh discoveries; instead they are drawing on the stock of original ideas thrown up by their precursors, which can often now be more effectively realized thanks to improved lighting and staging techniques.

Our theatre accordingly lives "sous le signe de l'éclecticisme", where everything is grist to the designer's mill, there is no longer the same preoccupation with style or with clearly definable principles, and all solutions are ad hoc. In the apparent muddle to which this leads, particularly in the better equipped and financed theatres, it is hardly surprising if the critic's eyes turn to the margins: to that new form of painter's theatre in which no painting occurs but much webbing and wrapping in bags, or of the extreme elitism of Grotowski and the messianic nudism of the Living Theatre as shown in two rather hideous photographs of *Paradise Now*. Often these are not scenic revolutions so much as scenic abdications, attempts to leave the scene and take the action elsewhere.

There has really only been one clear line of development in the last thirty years, and it is not exactly revolutionary, though admittedly it sprang in the first place from a revolutionary view of the theatre. This is the "selective realism" or "art du discontinu" as practised by Brecht's designers and seen at its best here in Damiani's beautifully simple sets for *Galileo* and Acquart's clever drawings for the Planchon *Troilus* of 1964. The fallacy perhaps—and it is a fallacy inherent to the whole traditional conception of aesthetic revolutions and avant-garde art—lies in the fact that once stylistic inhibitions *and technical limitations no longer* demand to be overcome, the real revolutionary effort shifts to other planes, not all of them within the scope of the present book.

One is that of the relationship between audience and stage, which has a psychological as well as a physical aspect; another that of establishing the right space for them, by finding, building or else building on what one can find. M Bablet, certainly, is aware of both these, which is why he very early on stresses Appia's prophetic conception of "la *salle*, cathédrale de l'avenir" and ends with the Bread and Puppet Theatre and some fine pictures of the Théâtre du Soleil in its great shed at Vincennes. None the less if he had given them the same attention that he devotes to the more orthodox scenic plane he would surely have needed to include other, non-architectural examples, while there are still further planes—such as that of wholly non-European theatre—which are never considered at all.

Theatre economics, again, are *always treated by historians as a* highly mysterious field, full of miraculous forces and unexplained catastrophes. And yet it is very clear that if the technical resources of the designer have vastly extended, the limitations imposed by such factors as union agreements and (in Germany) joint consultation rights are more constricting than ever. This calls perhaps for a new kind of theatre history, in which the cost of a production, or a set, will be as essential a fact as its location and date. For truly original solutions can only occur in those areas where the problems are difficult; nor do they have to be purely aesthetic for the result to be aesthetically exciting.

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By A. J. P. Taylor

P. A. REYNOLDS and E. J. HUGHES :
The Historian as Diplomat
Charles Kingsley Webster and the United Nations 1939-1946
160pp. Martin Robertson. £7.85.

C. K. Webster was an outstanding diplomatic historian of the prewar and post-war years. He published substantial works on the foreign policies of Castlereagh and Palmerston and also collaborated with Noble Frankland on the magnificent history of Bomber Command—quite the best of the official military histories.

For some twenty years he was an inspiring professor of international history at the London School of Economics. Webster loved academic life but, like other academics, he also played an active part in public affairs during wartime.

His first bout came at the end of the First World War when, as a young man, he wrote a little book *on the Congress of Vienna for the* guidance of the peacemakers at Paris. Webster later lamented that his book had no observable effect whatsoever. In this he was wrong. As Harold Nicolson records, the peacemakers learnt from Webster's book that the contents of their wastepaper baskets should be efficiently destroyed.

In the Second World War Webster had a more influential role. He was enlisted by the Foreign Office and played a large part in drafting the charter of the United Nations. In June 1945 when the charter was signed, Webster wrote in his diary: "If the Charter succeeds, I shall have made a greater contribution to history than I ever thought it possible that I could do."

The bulk of *The Historian as Diplomat* is made up of excerpts from the diary Webster kept during the drafting of the charter. He had an uphill struggle. He had a clear academic idea of what a perfect United Nations should be. His diplomatic colleagues usually accepted his proposals but they had a more important matter to consider. They had to keep in step with "the old man", Winston Churchill, and Churchill cured little for diplomatic niceties. Webster recorded in June 1943: "Winston has never really taken much interest in foreign policy. It is an appalling thought that he should take such decisions so recklessly and that there should be no one to stand up to him."

Later the Cabinet approved Webster's draft instructions at a brief meeting and Churchill said: "There now: in 25 mins we've settled the future of the World. Who can say that we aren't efficient?" Cadogan, the permanent under-secretary, commented on the meeting: "A complete madhouse—PM knows nothing about it." Attlee agreed with Webster but "would not oppose No 1". Eden merely said that the paper was too long.

Webster found the Americans equally trying. "They seem to be either entirely stupid or are even more stupid in trying to be Machiavellian." Of the Yalta conference Webster wrote: "All this is expediency and trickery and there is no principle amongst those men who have held power until they are unable to make decent and honest judgments." Webster should have learnt from his own historical studies that what others call "expediency and trickery" are often necessary in diplomacy if results are to be achieved. Indeed Webster became pretty adroit himself as time wore on.

The essential problem from start to finish was whether the four great powers (China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States—with France later added as a fifth) should have a special position on the Council. At first Webster held "that if they are united it does not matter & if not nothing can be done". Later he came to realize that the leaders of the great powers did not agree with him as he, too, accepted the veto, partic larly in order to win over Soviet Russia. The outcome was a 'hor trade. The Russians dropped the demand for sixteen Soviet republics to be members of the Assembly, and Great Britain and the United States accepted the veto, as the Americans had intended to do all along. There were other tangles. Churchill wanted to have the United Nations and an exclusive Anglo-American alliance, which contradicted this, as well. Once the great powers were agreed, the smaller powers complained. Webster wrote with exasperation of Evatt, the Australian representative: "He is the ablest statesman of the smaller powers—and a really malignant man. He obviously hates us."

In the end the charter was approved by a unanimous vote of fifty. Webster wrote: "I could not help feeling a little sentimental about it... I have certainly never before had so much influence on a great event." But was it a great event? When Webster surveyed the record of his activities he wrote:

> I can't help liking the Russians, even the toughs. I believe we ought to get on with them if we try hard enough, though I don't pretend it will be easy.
>
> On this last thing depends the future of the United Nations Organisation even more than on the shape we have given to it. But the machinery which we have made should make such agreement possible if it is desired. And if it is not desired, no machinery will be any good.

In these last sentences Webster unwittingly confessed the futility of the service he had performed so laboriously and so conscientiously. The United Nations, like the League of Nations before it, was a fair-weather system. It has had nothing to contribute when the storms began to blow. Now it provides sinecures for diplomats from many countries. They are richly paid; they have a great sense of their own importance; and they do no harm. Of course if the great powers ever agreed, the United Nations would work. But then it would not be necessary.

My Children's Book

So I sit down and create a few characters :
a horrible rabbit called Big Bunny Biscuits,
who tortures little children by means of arithmetic,
snapping off their arms and legs when they can't add up ;
a buccaneering dog called Billy Barker,
whose terrifying growl makes little girls deaf
at a range of half a mile ; a sinister sheep
who treats little boys' heads as pasture
and crops them down to a velvety crewcut.
Its name is Capillary Phlogiston.

All babies, at birth, are forcibly inducted
into the Anti-Saccharine Society.
In the Great Jungle are child-eating orchids
(Rhodesia Boysonia) ; there are world-beating snakes
and a very bad pop group called Chrys an' the mums.

In my book even the jokes will be bad.
Everyone will live in a state of disgrace
and have misadventures. No angels or fairies
will be able to stand the atmosphere for more than a minute.
Real life (of any kind) will seem a blessed relief.

Gavin Ewart

Anyone for nude tennis?

By Roy Foster

MAX EGREMONT :
The Cousins
320pp. Collins. £6.50.

A book like Max Egremont's study of Wilfred Scawen Blunt and George Wyndham, too short to provide a full biography of either or to include much that is new, leaves itself open to a double danger: that of attempting to provide added weight by treating the heroes as symptomatic of their age, and that of presenting the conjunction of the two as something which in itself provides a new focus. Though at times coming close to both pitfalls, *The Cousins* manages by and large to avoid them. This is just as well. If Blunt and Wyndham represented anything, it was the inability of some important elements of the English upper class to relate to the advent of the twentieth century; they became, even for their class and their milieu, remarkably reactionary figures. As to the connection between the two, this had most meaning on the personal and familial level (Blunt was Wyndham's father's first cousin): their politics were usually sharply divergent, though Blunt helped to smooth Wyndham's way with the Irish Nationalists over his Land Bill.

Wyndham belonged to the group of "Souls" sharply described by Beatrice Webb (a caustic authority not cited in this study) as "gushing"; and this is what strikes one most forcibly from his letters and poetry. Mrs Webb also found the Souls "good to look at", and this quality at least Wyndham retained to the end of his life. But whether he was, as Blunt remarked and Lord Egremont repeats, "the ultimate man", is matter for as much debate as Blunt's conviction that Wyndham's poetry had "the sacred fire". There was a lack of balance as well as weight. Even before the debacle about the Irish Reform Association which ended his career, it is hard to concur with Wyndham's own dogged conviction that he would have been prime minister by the age of fifty-five. And Lord Egremont demonstrates just how much he was cracking up in the months that led to his resignation.

Blunt, a compelling figure and the subject of relentless memoirs, was less conventionally glittering, if superficially more interesting. His sex-life and his Arab horses seem to dominate much of the more recent references to him, though a full-scale biography is in the making; but he was notorious among his contemporaries for his anti-imperialist stance in Egypt and Ireland, where he was imprisoned by his and Wyndham's friend and associate, Arthur Balfour.

Not that this stance should be confused with radicalism, or any necessary taint of liberalism; Blunt's cousin and Wyndham's father, Percy, opposed British imperialism in Egypt but left politics in disgust over the cause of political reform in 1884, and Blunt's attitude was of this order. Like George Wyndham, who spent his last days rather pathetically trying to haul his local village "back to where it stood in the seventeenth century", Blunt loved being a squire and played the part to the full. At elections he drove his servants down to the village and instructed them to vote Tory.

As Wyndham progressed up through the floors of the Hotel Cecil, as it were, towards his ill-fated billet as Irish Chief Secretary, Blunt pursued a more erratic course in public life; but their friendship blossomed even when they found each other's politics "abominable" (which in itself tells us something about the age). The fabric of Wyndham and Blunt's association was made up of country-house weekends, poetry, family ties, and the Crabbet Club, centred on Blunt's idyllic house, where gilded late-Victorians dressed up and wrote light verse (Curzon won great success with an ode to Sin). It seems to have been rather an undergraduate existence, though generally decorous (when they took off their clothes it was in order to play tennis, which they did naked before breakfast).

A lifelong taste for juvenile earnestness adhered to Wyndham at least. In 1905, aged forty-two, after the collapse of his promising political career, we find him writing to Blunt:

> Meanwhile there is an English summer and Poetry and these I will share with you. . . . Shall we start a new magazine? Or write in *Blackwood*? Let us do something wholesome and primeval. . . . Let us resist Education and enlarge Liberty.

He also wanted to denounce "Innovation", and this was the motif that dominated the last few years of his life; it increasingly took the form of denouncing foreigners and international Jewish conspiracies. Early in his career he had been a surprising advocate of women's suffrage, but his last political battle was as one of the most hysterical Ditchers, fighting for the privileges of the House of Lords. Blunt, who lived longer, also withdrew but tended to solace himself in travel and Arabism. He also wrote much better than Wyndham, especially in his *Diaries*. But both had lost their bearings somewhere.

The Cousins is an attractive book, conveying much of the ethos of the age in an unabashedly sympathetic way, while retaining a balanced judgment throughout. There are inevitable obscurities arising from the encapsulation necessary in a short treatment of two full lives: Wyndham's Land Act, for instance, when seen in context, is not as "revolutionary" as it appears here. There are slips, but generally not of the author's making. The quibbles one is tempted to make are rather those of emphasis and approach. This is one of those rare modern biographies which is too cautious about psychological conjecture; both Wyndham's and Blunt's relations with old enemies as the late-Victorian lights shone images of their fathers could bear analysis, if not psychoanalysis. Awaiting sentence for his part in Irish land agitation, Blunt could only wonder what his father—who had died when he was a child—would have thought of him. The thought probably occurred more than once.

On a level of more vulgar speculation, details about Wyndham's marriage to the much-loved Sibell Grosvenor would be welcome. As a widow she had eighty suitors, "including the curates"; Wyndham married her romantically, against her in-laws' wishes, and then—for this book's purpose—she drops out. When he dies in Paris, it is Lady Plymouth who is with him. He once wrote to Blunt that "as a varity almighty lovers find each other after both are married". Lord Egremont adds only that Lady Plymouth and Sibell remained "on the best of terms". One wonders to what extent his marriage followed the model of Vita Sackville-West's *The Edwardians* rather than that of the romantic Souls. As for Blunt, there is something more to be said about the attraction felt by the English upper classes for Arabism, as this as well as later images of their history; but it is not said here.

Lord Egremont makes some large claims for the cousins and their world: describing a meeting of Henry James, Arthur Balfour and Wilfrid Blunt at Clouds in autumn 1887, for instance, he calls them "three of the most remarkable figures of their time". But Blunt was hardly in the class of the other two; and nor was Wyndham. ("Arthur has been too dear to me", he wrote to Sibell of his PM in 1903; but like others to whom Arthur was "dear", he was to find that this had strict limits.) Elsewhere, Lord Egremont is too judicious not to imply that there were elements of arrogance, complacency, insecurity and reaction which occasionally lend the Crabbet Club odd echoes of the Clermont Club. And the joint portrait that eventually emerges is essentially that of two

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TLS Commentary

A letter from Charlotte Brontë

By Alan Shelston

A previously unknown letter of Charlotte Brontë has recently come to light. It was found among some papers at Altrincham Public Library where it had apparently been held for some years: my attention was drawn to it by Mr J. W. H. Watters, Chief Librarian of the Borough of Trafford, and he has generously allowed me full access to it. A new Brontë letter is, of course, of considerable interest in itself, but in this case there are possible ramifications which may make the find even more exciting.

The letter, dated from Haworth, May 28, 1853, is written on the first and third sides of a folded sheet measuring approximately 7½in by 4in. The text reads as follows:

My dear Madam,

Your note touched me deeply. Authors often receive letters commenting on their works; but—in my own share of such communications—I must say it has been rare to recognize the spirit I seem to have felt in yours.

One assurance that we have done good; one testimony that we have assuaged pain—one kind genial recognition of the secretly and deeply felt wish to be something more than a mere *self-seeker*—comes more soothingly to the heart than all the eulogiums on intellect that ever men uttered. And if indeed to grief like yours—grief real, poignant and bitter—I have brought any sense of consolation—it seems graciously proved that my work has not been all wasted.

This hope sustained me while I wrote—that while many of the prosperous or very young might turn distastefully from the rather sad page—some—tested by what you well term "the pitiless trials of life"—might hear in it no harsh and unsympathetic voice. Accept my earnest good wishes, as well as my grateful regard—and believe me—my dear Madam

Yours very sincerely,
C. Brontë

The letter is written in what would clearly seem to be Charlotte Brontë's hand and I have no reason to doubt its authenticity. The address of Charlotte Brontë's correspondent is not given, but the font of ink inside blank page is her name: "Mrs Holland".

Although we do not have the envelope in which the letter was sent it was contained in two successive envelopes which might tell us more about both the letter and its recipient. The first of these is contemporary with the letter itself and on it is written, in what I take to be "Mrs Holland's" hand, "Letter from Charlotte Brontë Haworth/ May 28th, 1853—in answer to a criticism on Villette". There is then, a further inscription written above this at a later date, I think in the same hand, although by now more shaky: "Charlotte Brontë's letter. To be given to Mrs Roberts at my death." This envelope was itself contained in a larger envelope on which is written "Charlotte Brontë's letter to Aunt Lucy Holland received by me at the winding up of Bessie's affairs. June 26, 1943."

The letter, of course, is of immediate interest as evidence of a private correspondence about *Villette*, and for what it tells us of Charlotte Brontë's attitude to the role of the novelist. The altruistic impulse explicit in the reference to the "assurance that we have done good" and the disavowal of self-seeking add to what we already know about Charlotte's sensitivity about her public self-exposure as a novelist; it is entirely typical of her that she should respond so warmly to a private approach and contrast it with the "eulogiums on intellect" embodied, presumably, in public reviews. There is, however, a specific issue arising from the identity of Charlotte Brontë's correspondent which makes this letter particularly interesting. Charlotte names her as "Mrs Holland" in the letter itself, but the much later reference, on the second envelope, to "Aunt Lucy Holland" strikes a particular note for not only Brontë, but also Gaskell scholarship, for Miss Lucy Holland of Knutsford, a cousin incidentally of Mrs Gaskell, has been traditionally taken to be the original of Miss Matty—Miss Matilda Jenkyns—in *Cranford*. Could it be that what we have is a letter from Charlotte Brontë written in answer to a letter from "Miss Matty", and a letter moreover in which "Miss Matty" has revealed her personal circumstances and identified them with the themes of loneliness and loss embodied in *Villette*?

The initial objection to such a hypothesis lies in the fact that Charlotte Brontë refers to "Mrs Holland", whereas Lucy Holland of Knutsford remained a spinster until her death. This, however, is not insuperable: designations can be misapplied, particularly in the case of an unknown correspondent, and while Charlotte Brontë's correspondent would seem to have revealed some of her personal circumstances it may be that she was not categoric about her marital status. One might have hoped to find positive evidence by tracing the descent of the letter: accepting that the "Aunt Lucy Holland" of the second envelope and the "Mrs Holland" of the letter are the same person, I take the reference to "Aunt Lucy Holland" to suggest that the letter had remained in the family of the recipient and that she was remembered, if only by reputation, in 1943. Lucy Holland of Knutsford was born in 1800 but did not die until 1883, so such a supposition could apply to her. The "Mrs Roberts" of the first envelope I take to be an intimate—possibly a relation—and it is just conceivable that she might, if she had lived long enough, be the "Bessie" of the second envelope.

All this, however, must remain as conjecture. Preliminary inquiries, including the examination of the will of Lucy Holland of Knutsford and an investigation of burial registers and other church and chapel documents there, have so far failed to find a "Mrs Roberts" who might be in any way connected with the Knutsford Hollands. Furthermore it has to be admitted that Holland is a common Cheshire and Lancashire name, and while an examination of local directories of the period has not produced a rival "Lucy Holland", a married woman would not normally appear in such directories in her own name. The strongest confirmation of the hypothesis can only come from a reconsideration of what we know about Lucy Holland herself, together with what we can draw from the content of the letter when it is related to the situation of Miss Matty in *Cranford*.

The suggestion that Lucy Holland of Knutsford was the original of Miss Matty is rather more reliable than such attributions usually are. It is made authoritatively in A. W. Ward's introduction to the second volume of the Knutsford Edition of *The Works of Mrs Gaskell* (1906) and has received the support of a number of subsequent Gaskell commentators. I have also had it confirmed recently as a piece of family tradition by Mr David Holland, a member of the family who has interested himself in its history. Consideration of some of the details of *Cranford* does suggest certain discrepancies: Mrs Gaskell is particularly careful about the dating of the events of the novel, for example, and it is clear that she made deliberate adjustments—most notably in killing off Miss Deborah Jenkyns at the end of the first number—in her fictionalization of real-life experience. Such alterations, however, are only to be expected from any novelist basing fiction upon fact.

It is in the letter, however, that we have the strongest circumstantial evidence to suggest that Charlotte Brontë's correspondent might indeed be "Miss Matty". Charlotte Brontë refers to "grief like yours—grief real, poignant and bitter", while her comments on the "prosperous or very young" would suggest that her correspondent was a person to whom neither of these descriptions would apply. The whole tone of this letter suggests a response to an account of long-endured suffering which had motivated the original writer to respond to *Villette* as she would seem to have done. If it was indeed Lucy Holland of Knutsford who wrote to Charlotte Brontë she would have been fifty-three at the time of the correspondence—an almost identical age to Miss Matty at the beginning of *Cranford*, the concluding number of which, coincidentally, had appeared in *Household Words* seven days before Charlotte Brontë's reply. Furthermore, and most significantly, the entire fictional situation of Miss Matty in *Cranford* is governed by the fact that she lives out her life in the shadow of a broken love-affair, as a consequence of her rejection, in the past, of a character named in the novel as Thomas Holbrook. The basic facts surrounding this situation are described in Chapters 3 and 4 of *Cranford*: Thomas Holbrook is an older man whose proposal had been turned down because of social pressures. He is represented as something of an eccentric and he is deliberately reintroduced into the novel, revisiting Miss Matty in her middle age before he dies rather abruptly after a visit to Paris. Mrs Gaskell's narrator comments on Miss Matty's reaction to the death of her lover of long ago:

> Miss Matty made a strong effort to conceal her feelings—a concealment she practised even with me, for she has never alluded to Mr Holbrook again, although the book he gave her lies with her Bible on the little table by her bedside. She did not think I heard her or Cranford to make her s something like the Honourable Mrs Jamieson's, or that I noticed the reply: "But she wears widows' caps ma'am?"
>
> "Oh! I only meant something in that style, not widows', of course, but rather like Mrs Jamieson's."
>
> This effort at concealment was the beginning of the tremulous motion of head and hands which I have seen ever since in Miss Matty.

The fascinating possibility is thus clear: do we have here, in Miss Matty's situation as described in *Cranford*, the reflection of a real-life situation which inspired an unsolicited outpouring of the heart to the author of *Villette*? Did, in fact, Miss Matty write to Charlotte Brontë?

All we have at this stage is supposition, and that supposition itself depends on the suggestion that Miss Matty's experience in *Cranford* is closer to life than we have a right to suppose from hard evidence. Beatrix M. Tullemache, a local author, in *Cranford Souvenirs* (1900) posited an "eccentric Peter Leigh [sic]" as the original of "Miss Matty's lover". She describes him as "a small squire who had property just outside the town; . . . [where] he had erected an observatory, and yearly published a prophetic weather almanack", and goes on to say that he was "a bachelor to the end of his days". There was indeed a Peter Legh of Norbury Booths near Knutsford who published almanacks in the 1840s, and although he died in 1857, i.e. after *Cranford* was written, his memorial tablet in Knutsford parish church would suggest that he was a bachelor and, as with Miss Deborah Jenkyns, Mrs Gaskell could have anticipated his death for fictional purposes. I have discovered nothing so far to connect him with the Hollands and indeed his social circumstances (he was hardly a "small squire") would have made him an advantageous match for Lucy Holland rather than the opposite, as the fictional situation in *Cranford* would suggest.

The association of the newly discovered Charlotte Brontë letter with the personal experience of the prototype for Miss Matty must therefore remain, at this stage at least, entirely at the level of hypothesis; the circumstantial evidence, however, is attractively persuasive. There is one final coincidence which is worth our attention. Charlotte Brontë's letter is dated May 28, 1853: on the previous day Arthur Bell Nicholls had left Haworth Parsonage, apparently for good, after the rejection of his own application for the hand of Charlotte. Writing the letter that we have before us she can scarcely have forborne to reflect on the irony implicit in her writing words of solace to an unknown sufferer at such a time.

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Espionage

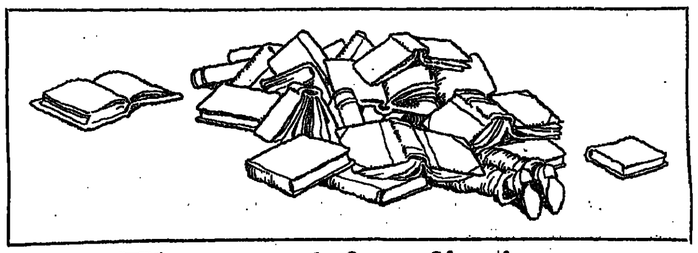
And take upon's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies.
—KING LEAR, *V, iii, 16.*

What distracted thoughts stand near
Unwilling to be heard,
Not bearing the unspoken
Though long unsecret word?

What may, what dare they dare,
Unwitting on what ground
Their thickshod feet may tread?
What's sought for may be found.

I.A. Richards

TLS Children's books



The need for fiction

By Mary Warnock

MARGARET MEEK, AIDAN WARLOW, GRISELDA BARTON (Editors):
The Cool Web
The Pattern of Children's Reading
Bodley Head. £7.50. (370 10863 9)

We have probably heard enough for the time being about declining standards in education. We have perhaps got the message that at least some adults, if not all, and at least some teachers, though by no means all, believe that children are leaving school too little able to calculate and read. This has led to discussion of a "core curriculum" of testing in numeracy and literacy, of concentrating on the teaching of reading in primary schools. We know about adult illiterates; we know how often delinquency and maladjustment go along with a perhaps undetected inability to read. So our attention has been concentrated, never so much as in the last year or so, on the desirability of making certain that children can read. The perfectly estimable thought behind this is that if they can, they will be more readily employable, perhaps better behaved and in any case much freer than an illiterate to lead a useful and satisfactory life. The present book demands that we look at reading in a different way. It does not deny the utility of reading. But its clear message is that even if children can read, they often do not. They simply do not want to read books; and if they do not, they are deprived, not so much of job opportunities, or of the independence which those bring, but of a different kind of freedom altogether—that of the imagination.

The editors of this collection are surely right to suggest that this second freedom is of the utmost intrinsic value, and is one of the goals of education. They argue, both explicitly in their own persons and through their selection of articles, that the reading of fiction, especially when one is young, is a unique way of expanding or exercising the imaginative faculty; and that without this ingredient education has failed. The question we must ask, therefore, is not so much (or not only) whether a child can read, as whether he does read, and what he reads.

The articles which compose the book are reprinted from various sources. They are arranged in four sections. The first is concerned, at the most general, philosophical level, with the nature of fiction and its connection with imagination. The second section is a collection of articles by authors of children's books, in which they discuss their methods and aims. Then there follows a collection of critical essays, illustrative of the various functions the literary critic may have in relation to children's novels; and finally there is a collection of articles in which the implications of the general argument of the book for teaching are explored. There is a good and interesting bibliography. The whole book has considerable coherence, and its argument is of great importance for education.

The argument is that in human life as soon as there is perception there is an element of detached judging, and this detachment is what we mean by imagination. Everyone has, more or less, the capacity to distance himself from experience, if only to describe it. But this merges on the one hand with the capacity to interpret, to *explore the deep* and hidden aspects of experience; on the other hand it merges with the instinct to make stories of experience, to recount as well as to describe. In the first essay, Barbara Hardy argues that we do not graduate, as we grow up, from fiction to fact, from fairy-tale to truth. "Fantasy does not come to an end at eighteen, but goes on working together with the more life-attuned modes of planning, faithful remembering, and rational appraisal." There is in fact no sharp distinction to be drawn between the images of memory of dream or of a projected or longed-for future. Thus the more one is enabled to image, in any of these ways, the richer one's present experience, and the more serious one's understanding of it will be. These truths seem inescapable. Thus imagination, in this wide and general sense, must be expanded by stories which are like dreams in that they provide a different world for the child to enter, to reflect on and explore, from which he learns, and which he moves in and out of, into his own world and back, using concepts and words he has picked up in the dream-world.

Children are more capable than grown-ups of being totally absorbed in a story. A storybook will not *appeal to them* unless the story does in some sense take charge and demand that they enter its pictured time and place. A child who never enters such worlds is deprived. His imagination, which is his freedom, is never given a chance to explore and play.

So children should learn to read in order to read stories. But what sort? Much of the present book is devoted to seeking answers to this question. Unsurprisingly, for the best essay which directly approaches an answer is C. S. Lewis's, first published in 1947, in the volume presented to Charles Williams. Here he argued that the imaginative response of a child (or of anyone) to a story is not determined by the plot, the mere excitement or suspense, but by the atmosphere, or mystery, the whole world, which the story as a whole expresses. It is here perhaps that we should look for the difference between good and memorable stories (like Lewis's own) and vulgar or trivial ones. Speaking of Jack the Giant-Killer, Lewis said "that heaviness, that monstrosity, that uncouthness hangs over the whole thing". There could be a story in which the odds against Jack were just as great, but it would be a totally *different* story. "Nature has that in her which compels us to invent giants: and only giants will do." This is not to say that all children's stories are symbolic (though there are some essays in this volume which suggest that, in crude, not to say ridiculous terms). It is rather that some aspects of life and nature, if vividly conveyed are haunting, and a child must be haunted by a story if he is to feel the excitement of his own imaginative powers. What *the child sees in* the story, the atmosphere it conveys, is sometimes difficult to understand for his parent or teacher. But if he reads and rereads a story then it is *that* (whatever it is he sees *in it*) not the plot which he wants to return to, "in life and art both", says Lewis, "we are always trying to catch in our net of successive moments something that is not successive." If we were not, it seems to me, our life would be without significance. Whatever other claims one may make for the imagination, perhaps the greatest claim is that it is the enemy of boredom.

A child who has "got into" a book, then, will be pursuing some such bird for his net and will emerge with an enlarged capacity to see meanings in his own life. Anything which prevents a child entering such fictional worlds completely is a source of deprivation. So do we do enough to ensure that children not only read, but read with the kind of total absorption of which Lewis speaks? The argument of the whole of this volume suggests that we do not; that the teaching of literature at school, the intervention of the teacher between the child and the story, the constant nagging distinction between good books and bad books, the insistence from an early age of analysis of plot and character: all these things tend to prevent children from reading as they ought. I am confirmed in my long-held belief that children, and this includes children at school, should be read to, should read by themselves, should discuss what they read *if they want to*, but should never have to answer examination questions on what they have read, unless, at a much later time (perhaps in the sixth form) they decide that they would like to learn to be critics. It seems to me, and everything in this volume suggests the same conclusion, that it is absurd that *everyone* should have to pretend to be a critic. English Literature as an examination subject (and quite distinct from English Language or comprehension) ought to be as specialist a subject as Greek or Russian or Ancient History. By all means let it be available for those who really want it. But to have it the commonest subject, to recommend it as a way of getting a child to read at least some books—this is likely to be death to the primitive value of reading, the entry to the world of the book with a suspension of critical intelligence. If we accept Lewis's theory, it is better to read bad or trivial books than none, and if a child wants to come back to a book and read it again and again, this is proof that for him the "bird", the atmosphere or the world-feeling, was dimly perceived in the plot, and is sought by the imagination.

Excellent though this volume is, there is, however, one obvious question which it hardly starts to answer. If the concept of story is central, at least to the childish, if not also to the adult imagination, is reading a story more educationally important than watching it on television? Why should we not go along with those people who humorously suggest that education has passed beyond literacy? (Beyond Freedom and Dignity too no doubt.) Lewis looks at this question (in relation to the cinema) briefly, and it is mentioned once or twice elsewhere, but not properly discussed. I am by no means inclined either to minimize or to deplore the influence of television, yet I still believe that a television film, even a serial faithfully and sensitively derived from a book, lacks the full power to expand the imagination possessed by the book itself. The reason is something to do with the nature of reading, though adept readers do not usually notice the individual words they read, yet the rhythm and sound of the words does actually effect them. The pace of the words varies, in a good book, with the pace of the story. The actual words themselves may be the most memorable and suggestive aspect of the book. However, it could be argued that at least part of this charm could be preserved on television. Spoken words also have rhythm.

A far more important point is this: it is the function of words *by themselves*, without supporting visual props, to suggest a half-realized world, to lead towards visual and auditory imagery with a far greater freedom than is possible in the explicit world of film. And these images we create for ourselves when we read are *our own*; they are private. They are of the very same substance as dreams, memories and visions of the future. They can be shared, but only with difficulty. In this way, reading is necessarily more solitary than watching television. In this lies its great strength. For the imagination must be exercised for the most part in solitude. Even if later the desire, even a sense of the *duty* to express what he has imagined becomes dominant (as it did for Wordsworth) still the first force of the imagination is felt by the child in isolation. This is the point of getting taken up by a *story*; it tends to happen to a child on his own. I would suggest that this is almost the greatest challenge to education, at the present time. How can we be sure, among all the togetherness, the team teaching, the open classrooms, the cooperative work of the modern school, that there remains, as a core, some residual solitude, in which children are able to use their imagination, and so be genuinely free? The best way to preserve this freedom is undoubtedly to teach children, not only to read, but to enjoy reading and to demand time to read what they enjoy. The uses of literacy are not and must not be thought to be only practical. Of this deep truth the present volume is a powerful reminder.

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The art of authenticity

By Marcus Crouch

He was filled through and through with a piercing awareness of life and the sweetness of life held in his hollowed hand, to be tossed away like the shining balls that the children played within the gardens of Rome.

That is one way of doing it. Here is another:

It had been a long and exciting day. He was plodding along Wood Street when suddenly he heard a familiar sound, a series of grunts accompanied by tinkling bells. He knew at once what it was—St Anthony's pigs, rooting in that garbage dump at the corner of a side lane. The brothers of St Anthony's Hospice, his old school, enjoyed the privilege of keeping pigs to roam the streets and pick up a living under market stalls or anywhere else. They were the only pigs in London allowed to go free.

In the one, Rosemary Sutcliff enters the mind and heart of young Marcus Flavius Aquila, centurion of auxiliaries in the second Legion, as he stands in the path of a battle chariot of the wild Britons. In the other, Cynthia Harnett puts her less spectacular hero in all the homely messiness of fifteenth-century London. Even then, they illustrate how the modern writer can lead his readers into the remote past, letting them see strange scenes with at least the illusion of authenticity.

Can authenticity be carried too far? There was the gentleman—American, I believe—who, writing a novel set in the time of the Great Rebellion, permitted himself no word or phrase which was not current in seventeenth-century England. The result may have been flawlessly authentic but it could scarcely have been readable in the second half of the twentieth century.

No one else has adopted so totally committed a policy, but there is a possibility that the well-researched historical novel will be uncommonly dull. It all depends on the writer's digestion. No one has done more conscientious homework than Miss Harnett. Because the innumerable facts out of which she builds her books are deposited not so much in a card-index as in the crucible of a well-ordered mind, the stories are equally convincing and entertaining, as many a young reader normally resistant to history has discovered with surprised delight.

It is no disparagement of Miss Sutcliff's scholarship to say that, as Miss Harnett weaves her stories out of the facts that she has discovered, she spins hers out of herself. No one can write a historical novel without research. But when all the labours in the study are done it is Miss Sutcliff's daemon—*to use her own word*—which takes over, and he is responsible for the battle-rage and the passionate awareness of strength and inadequacy and, one must reluctantly add, the occasionally uncomfortable purple patches which, albeit decreasingly, disfigure Miss Sutcliff's usually immaculate prose.

It is so much part of the folklore of children's literature that the historical novel was invented by Geoffrey Trease in 1934 and came into full flowering in the 1960s. The truth is different. Far from being the discovery of the present, or immediate past, generation of writers, the historical novel was born, fully armed, in the nineteenth century.

Apart from Scott and Bulwer Lytton and others, about whom modern opinion may vary, that century produced novels of a singular perfection, in *The Cloister and the Hearth* for adults and *The Carved Cartoon* for young readers. Many modern developments were foreshadowed, in this as in other fields, in the 1930s, by Trease of course, whose personal achievement and the force of whose example are beyond question, and also by Arthur Ransome, Eleanor Farjeon, Rosemary Sutcliff, Alfred Treslider Sheppard whose novels, if largely forgotten now, have not been excelled. Warmly as one feels towards the richly talented men and women who delight us and our children today, their achievement can be best appreciated in the context of the past, which reveals that the present age is notable for *numerical achievement. The best of* these times does not excel the best of the past, but the general level is infinitely higher.

Why should the modern novelist, faced with all the complexity of psychology and technology in the modern world, not to mention the worlds of space and of the imagination, choose to write about the past? For some it must be a straightforward escape from present dilemmas, giving a freedom to the imagination which produces a kind of fantasy, or an opportunity to enter a more colourful world with all the benefits of fancy dress. Television and cinema have found that the past offers access to attractive forms of sadism and pornography, and so have some historical novelists—not, for the most part, those writing for the young.

Some must be historians manqués, finding in an imaginative exploration of the past the satisfaction which scholarship has denied them. Many must have the converse motivation; they find that fiction gives them freedom from the heavier fetters of fact. All of them probably turn to the past for its stories. This must surely be true of writers for adults who, in other fields, are inhibited by the current convention which discourages narrative. Children's writers are less restricted, but they too find that history gives them a ready-made strong story line.

In some of its manifestations the historical novel is a chronicle of history. C. Walter Hodges enunciated the old-fashioned and, in his case, probably not too serious dictum, that "children ought to be *encouraged . . . by truthful examples* of success". If this should sound too much like Samuel Smiles, remember that Mr Hodges's success-story was about King Alfred. Mr Hodges's example is illuminating. There must be great temptations in the chronicle-story to take full advantage of hindsight and to write consistently from the standpoint of the twentieth century. Mr Hodges retained from his own time only the riches of a modern vocabulary and saw his story consistently with ninth-century eyes. The eye-witness approach has obvious advantages in immediacy, and in the two Alfred novels this is strengthened by the use of two witnesses, one from each party. *The Namesake* tells the early part of King Alfred's reign in the words of a Saxon totally dedicated to the King's cause. The second book, *The Marsh King*, has a narrator, whose identity is not immediately revealed, too young to have witnessed most of the events and who speaks partly from hearsay, partly from family traditions. This gives Mr Hodges a freedom which he perhaps lacked in the former book, and he does not scruple to abandon his narrator when the story calls for this, telling the story of the Battle of Klnwit in the heightened style of an Anglo-Saxon poem.

One should not ignore another method of approach to history, and the powerful stimulus to the young imagination given by the oblique historical story, in those books in which modern children are enabled, by a device more or less convincing, to establish relationships with people of the past. Kipling was the ultimate master of one method by which representative spokesmen of the past came into the present. In lesser hands this can be less satisfactory than the reverse process. There have been very many stories in which children, by uttering the appropriate formula or putting on magical clothes or a gauntlet, slip through the curtain into past ages where they witness or, more hazardously, participate in great events. *No writer did this with deeper conviction than Alison Uttley in the* story which, after nearly forty years, remains the model for all books of this kind, *A Traveller in Time.*

Mrs Uttley and Kipling both depended for the success of their work on the spirit of place. The stories work because of the reality of Batemans and Thackers. It has been said, not entirely convincingly in a general context, that all history is local history. Certainly in children's fiction some of the most rewarding work has been based on a limited topography, and this often matches the reader's own concern, growing as much from inclination as from teaching, with the landscape immediately around him.

Part of the great appeal of Barbara Willard's "Mantlemass" novels springs from the writer's delight in exploring the various layers of time in one particular and much loved locality. At the end of the cycle the reader may not be as familiar with the topography of the forest as the author is, but one has begun to recognize with an affectionate thrill the more distinctive features of this sylvan and industrial landscape.

There was a worthy inspector of schools who hated historical novels, or geographical novels, or any others in which facts were presented in fictional form, regarding them as dishonestly taking advantage of the young reader's gullibility. Reading for pleasure they were fed surreptitiously with material which belonged rightly to their textbooks. Much as one respected his craving for "pure" fiction, it must be clear that every story has a setting and a point in time, even those not concerned with terrestrial geography or chronology. Not only does the past offer a multitude of good stories; reading a historical novel encourages the child to a practical exercise in criticism, comparing the novelist's interpretation with the historian's and not always coming down in favour of the latter. It is a nice irony that despite the emphasis on those authors who have examined fearlessly the major *issues of their day and explored* the terrors and tedium of the future, the most consistently successful of the enterprises of modern writers for children has been the recreation of the past.

Uncivil wars

ROBERT LEESON:
The White Horse
Collins. £3.50. (00 184925 5)

Cavaliers versus Roundheads is an old but always an acceptable basis for a rousing adventure story. This chronicle of the Civil Wars is a good deal more than that. It completes a trilogy which started in the time of Drake and Hawkins, with *Maroon Boy*, was continued in *Boss*, and is now completed with *The White Horse*. All three books plunge the reader convincingly into these eras when violent changes were taking place in our history. They are full of excitement, and evince a burning feeling for truth and social justice, whether or not these serve the fortunes of the hero or heroine.

Matt Morten is the son of Boss, and Akenoro, a Cimaroon chief. He returns from the West Indies with a quest for vengeance against Ralph Ferrers, the man who victimized his mother. Caught up and recruited into Cromwell's army, he seeks his father's murderer on every battlefield in England. His great white horse is a symbol both of reality and fantasy, and although he grows high in Cromwell's favour, rising from trooper to captain, he returns finally to his father's land, casting off all the trappings of civilization. Life in the new "model army" is realistically drawn, with hunger, punishment, and general dreariness overriding any romantic conceptions.

The political turbulence of the times is well portrayed—treachery and self-seekers pervaded every level of society. It is also a refreshing change to have a headstrong and original hero who is not on the *side of the Cavaliers. The action* is fast and furious, and there is almost too much of it. Plot follows counterplot, and perhaps too often is pursued through dialogue rather than narrative.

Robert Leeson is a historical novelist of stature; a story-teller who takes his readers with him, eyes into the rabbit's mouth.

Brian Baumfield

Facts and fabrication

ANN LAWRENCE:
Between the Forest and the Hills
Illustrated by Chris Molan
Kestrel. £3.50. (7226 5282 8)

The first thing that strikes one on reading *Between the Forest and the Hills*, is the enormous enjoyment that Ann Lawrence has had in writing it, enjoyment which spills out from the pages to share itself with the reader.

It is an unusual book, about a comfortably decaying Romano-British town on the edge of the Dark Ages, and its relations, friendly and otherwise, with its nearest Saxon neighbours. "Both real and fantastic" is how the blurb describes it. That is a difficult mixture to handle, and I felt at times that the book was going to fall between two stools; but somehow it just managed not to.

The old men are a delight, especially Bishop Malleus with his endearing tendency to produce accidental miracles, which in fact are not miracles at all; they wear their old togas on best occasions, as they wear the remains of their Romanhood, shabby but clean; and they belong to the world in which they are set. The young people and the children are somehow less successful; as children of any place, any time, they are fine, but they do not begin to be Romano-British or Saxon children. Dialogue, always a problem to the historical novelist, tends here to the modern-commonplace, with no feeling for the differing rhythms of Latin, Celtic or Saxon speech. I found it sometimes actually jarring.

But Ann Lawrence has a lovely gift for description, and can bring a scene or a character clean off the page in one telling and evocative phrase. Teres, her one-eyed trader with his habit of quoting out of the future, chiefly from Shakespeare, adding "as somebody will say one day", introduces himself as a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. And in that he is akin to his creator who has snapped up the most surprising and delightful and sometimes moving trifles, and woven them lovingly into her story: women wearing red cloaks and marching up and down the ramparts to impersonate soldiers in the manner of the Welsh women who in that way frightened off a French raid during the Napoleonic wars; the Glastonbury Thorn, which serves for Bishop Malleus's one real miracle just when he needs it most; the Hallelujah chorus from Handel's *Messiah* which puts, quite literally, the fear of God into a Saxon raiding party.

The reador of this book will not come away from it much richer in the facts of the Roman withdrawal from Britain, and the onset of the Dark Ages. But the story has the ring of intuitive truth about it all the same; and he should bring away something of that, like buttercup pollen on his shoes.

Rosemary Sutcliff

Homely Horatio

NATHANIEL HARRIS:
The Nelsons (460 06736 2)
The Shaws (460 06735 4)
Illustrated by Andrew Farmer
Dent. £2.75 each.

When a family produces a genius, it is always interesting to ask why. Were the family uncommonly gifted already, did home circumstances provide a forcing-ground for talent, or was it a case, in the memorable phrase of Florence Nightingale's mother, of ducks hatching out a wild swan? Nathaniel Harris's two books, on the families of Nelson and Shaw, give food for thought.

The Nelsons seem ordinary enough. Horatio's father, Rector of Burnham Thorpe in bleak north Norfolk, was a kindly valetudinarian, with amiable eccentricities and a genuine piety, but no outstanding abilities. Of his seven other surviving children, Mr Harris gives an impression of provincial mediocrity, and one expects Horatio, the naval genius, to stand out among them like a wild swan in a farmyard.

That he does not is partly the result of the book's formula. The purpose of the series, to which these books belong, is to show a *great man in a domestic setting*, so that as much emphasis is placed on the years Nelson spent rusticating in Norfolk on half pay as on his exploits at sea. In an account of his exciting career had been sacrificed in order to provide a thorough analysis of his family relationships this might not have mattered, but the relationships themselves are treated sketchily. Nelson's firm Christian faith, derived from his father, is not mentioned, and the considerable strains which arose within the family when he abandoned his wife for Lady Hamilton are passed over briefly.

In fact Mr Harris appears more interested in systems than personalities. He describes the eighteenth-century apparatus of patronage and interest in some detail—though leaving out Nelson's ardent youthful declaration that he would take King and Country for his patrons. On the social attitudes and beliefs of the period Mr Harris is sound; and it is this, rather than the portrait of the Nelsons, which gives the book its value.

The Nelsons were a united, affectionate family; not so the Shaws. George Bernard's forlorn upbringing in a shabby-genteel Dublin house was *almost calculated to produce a* writer. Neglected by his indifferent mother, who lived only for her singing and her singing-master, and by his comically-pathetic drunkard father; obliged to associate with the servants, yet forbidden to play with the other children in the street, Shaw had to develop powerful inner resources to survive. Mr Harris tells the story in a clear, straightforward manner, allowing the plain facts to engage our sympathy. He breaks off at the point where young Shaw moves to London; but he has told enough to encourage his readers to find out more about Shaw and his work.

In both books the central characters are seen very much at one remove, for quotations from their own letters or other writings are disappointingly sparse. The full-page, black-and-white illustrations by Andrew Farmer, while representing adequately the period accessories of clothes, houses and ships, fail to do justice to the people.

Angela Bull

Cornish alchemy

VIOLET BIBBY:
Tinner's Quest
Faber. £2.95. (571 11029 0)

Jory Tregellis grows up in a community of Cornish tin miners and by the age of fifteen is already experienced as a miner. When he is assigned to the reopening of a long-flooded mine Jory hopes he may find some clue which will explain a family mystery: his father, Salen Tregellis, has been transported to Australia in the year of Jory's birth, allegedly for flooding this same mine. Jory is committed, for his mother's sake, to reuniting his parents, so when his reckless gold-prospector uncle sends word from Sydney that Jory should come and look for Salen, he and his mother sail for Australia.

The contrast between damp, gentle Cornwall and the heat, drought and harsh colours of the outback; the fever of men besotted with gold-digging; and the complexity of hunting for one long-lost Cornishman in the desert are some of the themes built into the climax of this well-constructed story. Violet Bibby combines detail from much careful research with a clear and fast-moving narrative. Despite a reconstruction of rural dialect which is doubtless as authentic as it is irritating, there is a forthright evocation of the grim conditions in which Cornish miners lived and worked, and a denouement skilfully free from sentiment.

Ros Franey

Cave men

GEORGE MACKAY BROWN:
Pictures in the Cave
Illustrated by Ian MacInnes
Chatto and Windus. £3.25.
(7011 5081 5)

Pictures in the Cave is a collection of short stories loosely centred on a certain sea-cave in the Orkneys. George Mackay Brown takes us down through the centuries with his cave, from the time it sheltered a stone-age tribe to its contemporary destruction in the interests of mineral exploration.

"The Man from the Armada", an episode coming chronologically and spatially about into the middle of the collection, will serve us as an example. Anna is a good-natured, hard-working girl but a very plain one. She lives with her father, a hypochondriac old widower, on a croft near the cave. The old man, concerned for the future of his land and worried by his daughter's continuing spinsterhood, tries to bully her into marriage with a neighbour, a mean, violent man. She resists. Meanwhile a Spanish galleon is wrecked on the shore nearby and one or two survivors manage to reach the cave.

Anna bluffs her way to them through the ranks of the assembled islanders who are momentarily wavering between thoughts of plunder and their consciences. She rescues a young man whom she takes to bed. He proves a good choice and eventually marries her. The future of the croft is secured and the arrival of a grandson reconciles the old man to the dark stranger.

This is familiar territory and adult readers with previous experience of the author will have no trouble orientating themselves. George Mackay Brown is Johnny One-note with a vengeance and the old characteristics are all on display here: the inevitable Orcadian setting; the monotonously short sentences all facing resolutely in the same direction (surely Mr Brown's only forward-looking attribute); the large number of one-sentence paragraphs; the constant rebuke to literary sophistication; in short, the notion that one can will oneself into primitivism and that an abc sort of simplicity is the signature of it.

Alasdair Maclean

Divided loyalties

MARY RAY:
Beyond the Desert Gate
Faber. £2.95. (571 10988 8)

This is a story of war, not from the point of view of the direct participants but as it affects those on its periphery, who are merely in the way and get drawn in because they have no choice. The setting is the Greek city of Philadelphia—the modern Amman—at the time of the Roman suppression of the Jews in the first century AD. The three sons of a Greek merchant are left fatherless and in debt. How they, and in particular the youngest, Philo, face up to the problems, economic and emotional, that are thrust upon them is the theme of the book. The catalyst and Philo's sheet-anchor in a sea of conflicting loyalties, is the Christian scribe Hylas, who has figured in two of Mary Ray's earlier books, *The Ides of April* and *Sword Sleep*. He is who suggests the practical course of letting the house as a mess for the Roman officers quartered in the town, a course which ultimately brings the three brothers together on opposing sides at the siege of Macherus, the last Jewish stronghold east of Jordan.

This is a deeply felt and very moving book, not least because of the real homelessness and domestic warmth which contrast so vividly with the bitter brutalities of war. Mary Ray has a talent for evoking the physical realities of faraway times and places without pedantry or sentimentality but with straightforward affection. She also possesses the most vital of novelists' gifts, the power to show us other people's problems and make us feel them as our own.

Anne Carter

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Finders, keepers

GILLIAN AVERY :
Huck and Her Time Machine
Collins. £3.50. (00 184775 9)

CHRISTINE NOSTLINGER :
Conrad
Illustrated by Frantz Wittkamp
Translated by Anthea Bell
Andersen Press. £2.25. (905478 03 7)

Huck and Her Time Machine is an unusual book to come from Gillian Avery. Instead of the expected historical novel, we have a fantasy, set very firmly in 1977. Barty, the youngest of the five Huxtable children—notorious throughout Oxford for their unconventional behaviour—discovers a strange contraption on a rubbish dump and takes it home. It turns out to be a time machine that has the ability to turn the members of his family into their ancestors in the last century; but instead of the excursion into the Victorian age which we might have been expecting from the pen of someone who has written so well of that period, the ancestors are brought into time present where they behave very oddly indeed, their values, manner of speech, preoccupations and behaviour contributing to a comic tale of near-disaster and catastrophe which is averted at the last moment. Huck, Barty's twin sister, is more interested in the time machine than he is—she is the more selfish and less responsible of the two—and sets about sending her brothers and sister into the past in the hope that such a course of action will improve their behaviour. It would spoil the story to reveal exactly what happens : sufficient to say that Gillian Avery has written a novel that shows her to be in command of a complex and exciting narrative, full of wise and witty observations, climax and suspense being exceptionally well handled.

Another bizarre and amusing fantasy comes from Christine Nöstlinger in *Conrad*, which, though different in content from Gillian Avery's book, matches it in suspense and comic observation. A mysterious parcel is delivered in error to a middle-aged woman, Mrs Bartolotti, who is eccentric and almost a recluse. It contains a seven-year-old boy who has been produced in a factory. He is a model of what certain codes of adult behaviour demand from children: brilliant in school, teacher's pet, helpful round the house, disgusted by swearing and naughty songs, well-mannered and incapable of lying. The children in his class of course loathe him, and Mrs Bartolotti, though she is thrilled to have a son (after the initial shock has worn off), is alarmed by and unhappy about his perfection. When the factory discovers that it has made a mistake—the child has been sent to the wrong address—Mrs Bartolotti realizes that the only thing she can do if she is to keep him is to re-educate Conrad into being a normal badly-behaved child, so that the people who manufactured him will not recognize him. *Conrad* is an immensely readable and satisfying book, with a number of delightful and thought-provoking comments on the differences between what parents may expect of children and what children are really like, and on the adjustments and compromises both generations need to make to each other if family life is to work happily.

David Rees

New haunts

RICHARD PECK :
The Ghost Belonged To Me
Collins. £2.95. (00 184268 4)

NATALIE BABBITT :
Tuck Everlasting
Chatto and Windus. £2.95.
(7011 5095 5)

Both these books have a similar approach to traditional story telling, and both have the added advantage of being part of an increasingly American phenomenon; the stylish, casual, well-written, and well-told story. There seems to be a widening gap between the kind of story-telling in these books and that of much current British fiction. There is a good-humoured ease, even in the most serious moments, which is far more in tune with the way twelve to fifteen-year-olds actually think and speak, even on this side of the Atlantic.

The Ghost Belonged To Me is a conventional ghost story, of a drowned girl and her dog. These two appear to Alexander Armsworth, demanding to be allowed to rest more easily and by various means, the bones are located and taken to their proper resting place. The circumstances of the appari-tion, Alexander's relations and the whole small-town, turn-of-the-century atmosphere in Middle America is conveyed with an easy, enviable skill. The bizarre machinations of a New Orleans reporter, a strange girl whose mother has second sight, a madman who chops down and burns a wooden bridge; these are only a few of the events and characters effortlessly packed into the short story. There are more witty asides on each page than in the whole of many British books.

Tuck Everlasting has the same casual quality but there is less deliberate humour. Here, a girl in limited circumstances accidentally meets an odd, likeable family, rendered immortal by chance some eighty years before. Perhaps Natalie Babbitt draws her characters too dimly, though it may have been quite deliberate, as timelessness and the constant cycles of life and death supervene. Everything irrelevant has been pared away, leaving behind a genuine fable. There are morals if you wish to extract them, though the principal quality which it shares with Richard Peck's book is a capacity for imbuing delight. There are links in style with certain kinds of science fiction; where the demands of editors have forced writers to cut and cut and cut again.

Brian Hall

Spells of power

DIANA WYNNE JONES :
Charmed Life
Macmillan. £2.50 (333 21428 0)

To the reviewer's jaded palate stories set in invented other worlds, involving magical apprenticeships and witchcraft contests, are scarcely more welcome than yesterday's cold fillet of a fenny snake, so it is a pleasant surprise to come across a really enjoyable example, one that avoids portentous moralizing or mythologizing in favour of a rapid and remarkably sustained comic action. Diana Wynne Jones's *Charmed Life*, in spite of touches of Joan Aiken and, in the final chapters, C. S. Lewis, is an outstandingly inventive and entertaining novel, which never for a moment loses its characteristic pace and verve. The setting is a world whose culture has evolved through magic rather than technology, where taxpayers subsidize research into spells and warlocks appeal to their MPs when deprived of their powers. There are some splendid set pieces of witchery, such as the havoc caused during a dull sermon when the sober figures in the stained glass windows run riot, and a stone crusader thumbs his nose at the vicar. The comic invention is at once prolific yet well-disciplined, and the presentation of a parallel scheme of things is much strengthened by the introduction of a heroine from our own world, who finds the Edwardian garters, petticoats and boot-buttons all too much for her. The plot combines real surprise with psychological and fictional consistency—you must wait till the very end for the opening mysteries to be explained. Altogether a delightful book—my only regret is that the publishers could not have run to some illustrations by Ionicus, who has drawn the highly effective and appropriate jacket.

Julia Briggs

Edgar in Edenborough

ANTHONY BURGESS :
A Long Trip to Teatime
Illustrated by Fulvio Testa
Dempsey and Squires. £2.95.
(860 44 005 2)

Polite applause is due to this latest display of Anthony Burgess's versatility. *A Long Trip to Teatime* is, as the blurb says, "ostensibly for children". Its hero, a schoolboy called Edgar, during a lesson on the kings of Anglo-Saxon England in the last period before the Easter holidays, looks at the little holes pierced in his desk by "doodling compass or dividers" and wishes that his real self could shrink small enough to escape down one of them leaving his body seeming to attend to the lesson. No sooner written than done and by the bottom of the first page Edgar is being spoken to by the captain of a ship on whose deck they are standing together voyaging through the hole.

Lewis Carroll is the obvious progenitor of this kind of story, and Carroll's word-games enliven parts of the text; but grafted on this root-stock—if I may use a horticultural metaphor—is a lively sprig of *Finnegans Wake*, a different kind of dream book. The plot, according to the blurb—which also says that "Edgar vanishes through the ink-well"—is provided by the alphabet, and—much more likely—"the narrative is made up out of a section of the encyclopaedia".

The method of "aleatory composition"—directing one's plot according to words chosen at hazard from a reference-book—was one recommended to would-be writers in a course on creative writing Burgess described in one of his books. Like all other systems its success depends on the abilities of those who use it; here, added to Anthony Burgess's phenomenal facility with words, the result tends to be bewildering and over-literary for the book's ostensible purpose: I doubt if many children will ever read it through on their own.

The whimsies will amuse many readers. For example, Edgar meets a van marked Edenborough Revue which is carrying such characters as Tommy Curlyle, who remarks characteristically: "Och, ye wee sleekit cowerin' beastie", and Tom Macaulay, and Bill Gladstone who has a big bag on his knee. Later they try to throw some poets in a lake. When they succeeded with one fat poet "he lay there crying: 'Now I understand, *His floating hair*. I always wondered what it meant when I wrote it.'" Edgar, one is pleased to remark, becomes "disgusted by the whole unseemly business" and goes away.

An astonishing number of people are mentioned, including Jonathan Edwards, whose works one of a patch of wayside flowers arguing about Free Will advises another to read. And Thomas Alva Edison who comes in when a mad dog, that thinks it is King Edwin of Northumberland, asks Edgar to read him a poem on a bottle label.

Before Edgar can reach teatime he has to pass through Edenborough, which I suspect—although we are obviously using the E volume of an encyclopaedia — comes out of *Finnegans Wake* where there was a "hubbub caused in Edenborough". Here he meets the Blatant Beast who is a man with a face at the back of his head as well as the usual one in front. Edgar is told that "he used to teach in a school, you know. And useful he was . . . when he was writing on the blackboard he could see what the young rascals was doing. When all the teachers but him was away ill with affluenza he used to teach two classes at once—one in front one behind."

Edgar finally escapes by passing an examination which begins with fairly easy questions and ends, "Explain the theory of relativity." Fortunately he is helped with the last question by a mouse called Albert. I enjoyed reading his experiences. The pictures, except for the one showing the start of his voyage where the captain should be on the ship, are very suitable.

J. S. Atherton

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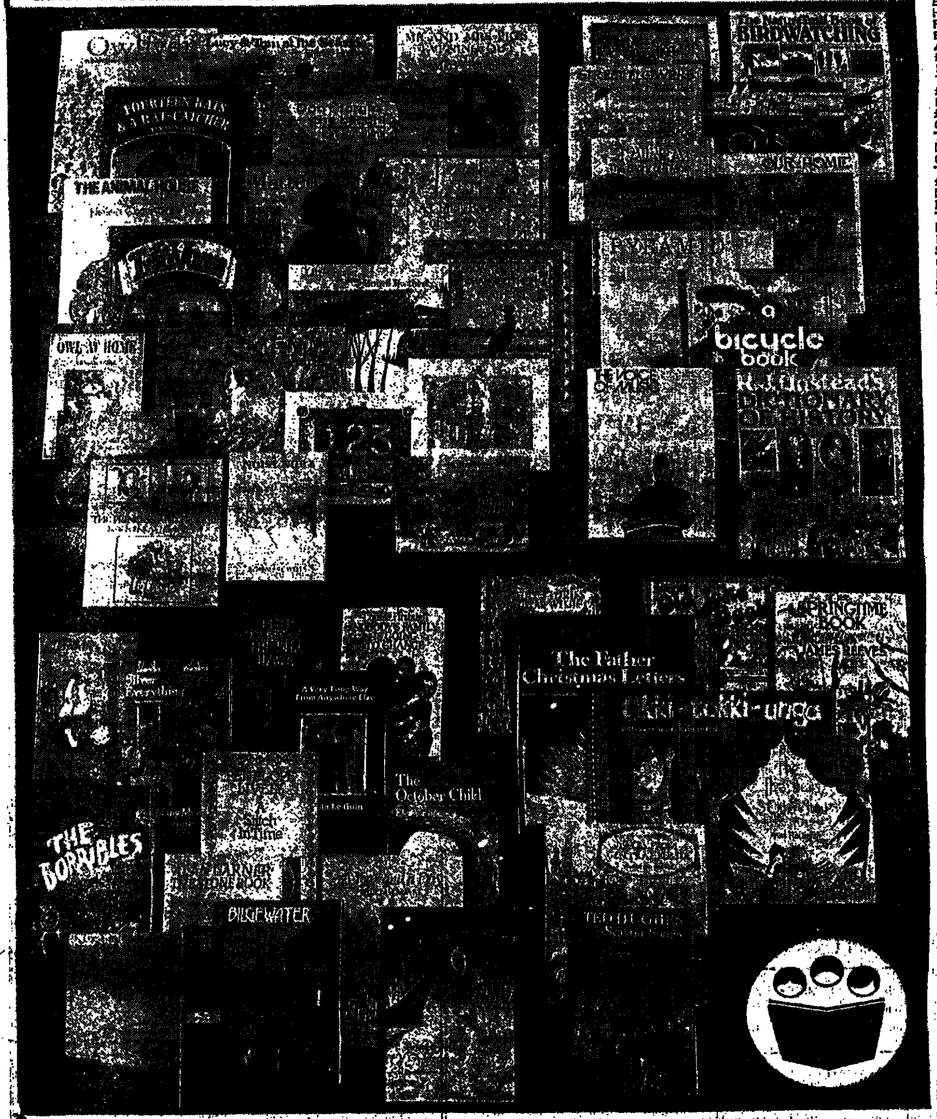
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Enriching the humdrum

ROY FULLER :
Poor Roy
Illustrated by Nicholas Bentley
Deutsch. £1.95. (233 96802 4)

Roy Fuller's new book of verse for children labours, in places, under the disadvantage of having to overcome Nicholas Bentley's inappropriate illustrations. Mercifully there are few of these, but I do find them irritating. According to the blurb, they "exemplify the very special kind of observation, humour and perception which distinguish all Roy Fuller's poetry"; whereas, in fact, they are crude cartoons which appear to be picking up detail from the poetry but often get it thumpingly wrong. Here is a characteristically attractive little piece which may serve to give the flavour of much that is to be found in *Poor Roy* :

I often say I only need to go
To shops a hundred yards or so
away
For something to enrich a humdrum
day,

This morning I met father, son and
dog,
They had been playing with a
football on
The heath : old dog, young father,
infant son.

No doubt they were going home.
The child was last,
The father next, the dog (though
short on strength,
Cataracts in both its eyes) led by a
length.

Surely part, at least, of this poem's point lies in the gradations of age—"old dog, young father, infant son"—and I fail to see why Nicholas Bentley places a seedy old gent in dark glasses at the centre of his picture. True, Roy Fuller likes to portray himself as something of an amiable old duffer in a number of the poems—but that has got nothing to do with it here ; he is observing neatly, and his illustrator is missing the point. I much preferred Joan Hickson's unobtrusive decorations to the earlier *Seen Grandpa Lately ?* The pictures matter, particularly, in collections of verse for the young ; imaginative and complementary, or slight and incidental, in *Poor Roy* they are neither, and strike me as a serious miscalculation.

The poems themselves range from the "shorts" of a nursery Auden—a kind of domestic graffiti ("Nothing can really beat/For a quick sensuous treat/Clean socks on just-bathed feet")—through some clever satire for older children, among which "Leaving School" is the best and most deserving to be rapidly anthologized by the course-book impresarios, to a few good poems. *Poor Roy* seldom rises above the level of comment. It is about as earthbound as a bird-table ("I thought I should attract goldcrests. . . . But all I did was multiply/The sparrows and the pigeons") ; yet at the same time there is something about its modest directness which is appealing.

In a recent lecture which appeared in *Children's Literature in Education* (Spring 1976), Roy Fuller observed that "in composing poems children ought at least to understand, if not positively like, I was faced fairly and squarely with the problem of being interestingly—inspiredly !—simple, like Housman". A tall order, but in poems like "Tree Houses", "Seven Flies" and "After Apollo" he comes close to a solution. The interest is certainly there, if not (except in flashes) the inspiration. In the same lecture, though, he pointed out that writing a "whole bookful of poems for children, not to say a good many unpublished bosh shots . . . brought about a habit of positively searching (in one's mind or in the world) for subjects for poems, rather than waiting for the poetic afflatus to descend", and it must be admitted that *Poor Roy* contains a number of little contrivances which Roy Fuller would have been advised to consider among his "bosh shots" and consign to the stuffed waste-paper basket which his illustrator (this time rather aptly) places beside the head-scratching, Professor Branestawm caricature of the poet on the dustjacket.

On the whole, though, a pleasant and enjoyable book. Admirers of Roy Fuller's recent poetry (particularly *From The Joke Shop*) will value it all-of-a-piece, while children—as children do—will pick and choose to advantage.

John Mole

The Stone Heads At Long Melford

While angels keep their watch among
Inscriptions in a foreign tongue
And rooftop cherubim inflate
Gob-stoppered cheeks at heaven's gate,
These roughnecks make no claim to be
A consequential Trinity
But sprout their nonsense from the wall,
Incongruous and lovable.

Something true about this place
Moves with the light on each odd face—
O mortal ones of little brain,
We shall visit you again.

John Mole

A Kiddie's Tale

(for those who would emasculate dragons)

The writer's pen moved and the dragon, all
But tamed, waddled his innocuous way
Through the dull pages of a uncouse tale
Beaming at kids and giving rides, while they
Well-washed and pretty, waved from his ridged back,
Prised fingers in between his tender scales ;

But sometimes you might capture just a look,
Rapt, secret, in the eyes of a boy or girl
Who rode, as though the ancient furnace smouldered still
Beneath their bodies. If this was so, none spoke.
But some were found who strangely danced one day
And while they danced the rumbling dragon's smoke
Rose high above the ruined citadel
Spelling old runes across the silent sky.

And when the writer started Chapter Twelve
And slowly spelled the dragon's secret name
The paper swiftly crackled into flame
And from the flame there rose an acrid smell.
Devouring teeth clashed on the moving quill
A cavernous mouth engulfed the writer whole
And drew him down into the reeking bowel.

Gerard Benson

Rhymes and reality

BRIAN THOMPSON (Editor) :
Bulls Eyes
Kestrel. £2.94. (7226 5231 3)

Sadly, too many anthologies published over the past decade have concentrated on presentation and packaging rather than on content. Skilful and sympathetic illustration cannot disguise the dud ; the bad poem, brilliantly read aloud and tricked out with music and sound effects, soon—by its very nature—comes to grief.

Brian Thompson's anthology *Bulls Eyes* wears the sort of jacket (hard, bright, a bit too much in the manner of a children's comic) that, at first glance, stirs up my blackest suspicions. That it should have half a dozen illustrators would seem to me to have invited a dangerous fragmentation of the book's basic unity : here reflecting, very properly, the taste and judgment of a single editor. As it turns out, a daring idea is a total success. The illustrators are a good and various mixture, of style and approach, and their work reinforces delightfully a collection of exceptional originality and strength.

Mr. Thompson, always un-trendy in his choice, and mercifully unstrait-jacketed by including work by currently unfashionable writers, presents a vastly entertaining and imaginatively nourishing selection that ranges from Rose Fyleman to Lorca and Brecht, from Longfellow to Reaney and Hoban. Nor, in half a dozen cases, does he scorn the Old Favourites, provided it is a good poem. My only disappointment is that Sidney Keyes's "Nefertiti" has not been included and paired with the traditional rhyme Mr Thompson chooses about the same lady.

By contrast, many of the verses in Joan Griffiths's *My World*, a selection from the BBC's "Living Language" series, rest rather less happily on the page—but with good reason. This, primarily, is a collection of verse to be read aloud. As an introduction for a child, to personal, utterly recognizable world of poetry, and as an incentive to the child to think and write creatively, it could hardly be bettered. The whole selection is closely and carefully related to the reality of a child's life; a day at school, games and pastimes, events within the family group. It encourages, at every point, a sense of awareness of the poetry of everyday living.

For my taste, there is a little too much "light" versifying ; and one is aware, occasionally, of the chill hand of the writer of verse purely "for children". The simple rule that a good children's poem is one that also works for an adult has not always been followed here. All the same, I see both these collections as of particular value in primary schools, and to the non-specialist teacher of English.

Charles Causley

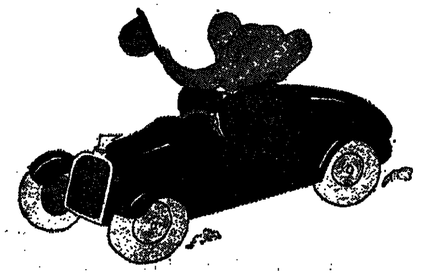
The importance of being Uncle

MERVYN PEAKE :
Letters from a Lost Uncle
Methuen. £2.95. (416 56540 9)

Like innumerable other fathers, Mervyn Peake was required to tell his small sons stories, and *Letters from a Lost Uncle* has a desultory charm that reflects its beginnings as a yarn spun in 1945 for an audience chiefly interested in pictures and incident. In outline it does not amount to much: black sheep Uncle tells how he abandoned his ugly wife to quest over the tropics and the Arctic wastes in search of the Great White Lion, the only one of his kind, who is finally found dying on a throne in a huge cathedral of green ice. The layout of the book, which integrates text and picture, looks back to *Captain Slaughterboard* ; the lonely vagrant on a fantastic quest looks forward to *Titus Alone* ; the White Lion is perhaps the first hint of the evil and terrifying Lamb of *Boy in Darkness*. Other motifs appear which are equally characteristic of the author. But it would be a pity to look at *Letters from a Lost Uncle* only, or even primarily, for this reason. It is well able to stand on its own.

Its fascination lies partly in its language, partly in the characterization, especially of Uncle's woebegone factotum, the turtle-dog Jackson, and, overwhelmingly, in the illustrations. A child would, I hope, be particularly pleased by the many pictures of poor Jackson: taking a well-earned nap ; laden with the expedition's chattels, hung from the nails that Uncle has callously banged into his shell ; sitting patiently on a raft "among the coughing waves" ; acting as Uncle's easel (Uncle is an accomplished artist) ; pulling Uncle in a sledge ; and so on.

Grown-ups will certainly be charmed by the brilliance of Peake's soft pencilwork, and the gay Gothic fancies with which he crowds every page. My own favourite is the drawing of a finger bandaged with a snakeskin. This is only a little book, but it is guaranteed to grow on your affections.



Action men

ELWYN JONES :
Dick Barton
Special Agent
Arthur Barker. £3.95. (213 16619 4)

"The Light Programme has launched a real dud in *Dick Barton, Special Agent*", said the *Daily Worker's* radio critic in October 1946. By April 1947 the audience for the programme was fifteen millions. Will any reviewer dare to say that Arthur Barker have launched a real dud in this late resurrection of ex-Captain Richard Barton, MC, and his faithful Jock and Snowey ?

Elwyn Jones, well known for his *Z-Cars* and *Softly, Softly* scripts, has "novelized" three old adventures from the Barton canon. He writes for the kind of young reader who must have vigorous new action every three or four hundred words, with no time wasted on description, characterization or reflection. Action is all. But there is one poignant moment when Barton, temporarily outwitted, says to his mates: "We'll go into a huddle over a decanter, collect our wits, and give ourselves a filthy headache thinking."

It is not doubted that thinking gives people a filthy headache, but what is this about a decanter ? The BBC rules for the conduct of Barton (quoted by Mr Jones) lay down that the man is teetotal. It is not so bad when Dick and Snowey, having narrowly escaped being eaten by rats, are offered "brandy" (they both took great gulps"), but decanters as an aid to decision-making are a cheeky innovation.

The rules against bad language are observed. Hearing screams, Barton exclaims "Jiminy" and Snowey "Lovaduck, sir". Barton and his aides are supposed to use their fists only, but gunplay is rife. Page 109: "Barton fired. 'A beauty, sir. Spoilt his good looks'." Their interrogative methods do not stop at arm-twisting. Page 83: "Barton said 'Three', and fired. Kramer gave a scream of agony. 'That was only the fleshy part of your leg. Next time it will be your knee-cap. . . .'" Page 90 : "Barton grimly put a poker into the blazing fire and turned to the Professor." Needless to say, Barton does harm only to prevent worse harm.

Men who are forever threatened by infected rats, dagger-carrying apes, acid shower-baths, poison gas and rising waters learn to take the deaths of others with a light laugh. When Limpy the crook drops dead with an arrow through his heart, Colonel Gardiner jokes about the unseen William Tell who "pings a pretty double top through Limpy's pump". As another crook blows himself up with a grenade, Barton comments: "One more of Lucifer's gang who won't be troubling the hangman." (Yes, children, those were the days of the gallows.)

"Sex, in the active sense, plays no part in the Barton adventures." Barton is here reduced to a truly awful line of leching and kidding when ever a female comes into sight. Jean Hunter, the Colonel's girl, looks on him as a male highead and she is right. A tough girl, Jean. In escaping from a locked car boot she shows much of the quality of the Bionic Woman.

The longest of the three tales deals with a man who seeks to dominate the world with a secret weapon. This type of story was specifically discouraged in the BBC's original concept, but the early scriptwriters chuckled and ignored the brief. The second story features a group of villains who have found out how to make diamonds cheaply. Not, perhaps, the most flagitious of crimes, but Barton is persuaded that if such gems come into general circulation "world economics will become topsy-turvy". That is good enough for our heroes, who smash up the various plants with all the zest of vandals wrecking a school laboratory.

The lads seem a little prone to walk into booby traps and accept doped drinks, but it is left to a professor to step into a lift which has no floor. A Mrs Horrock "does for" Barton, as Mrs Bardell did for Sexton Blake. "She's a good soul", says her master, "she could get a first-class job in service anywhere." Her working-class forthrightness shines through when she is bound and gagged by rogues.

Parents who were hooked on Barton in the 1940s may wonder what they ever saw in the series. Was there really such a headlong rush of incident ? Perhaps when spread from night to night the frenzy was less noticeable. What will today's children make of this book ? One thing is sure: it won't give them any filthy headaches.

E. S. Turner

Return of a native

JEAN DE BRUNHOFF :
The Story of Babar the Little Elephant
Methuen. £4.95. (416 57650 8)

It is now well over forty years since Babar, the King of the Elephants, made his triumphant journey across the Channel to conquer the affections of British children. The reasons for his continued popularity are not difficult to divine: despite his elephantine disguise, Babar is clearly a small boy who is privileged to invade the world of adults. The relaxed storytelling and inventive illustrations of Jean de Brunhoff are added incentives to the child's enjoyment of the adventures of his consistently appealing characters.

It is a tribute to the skill of Jean de Brunhoff's art and to the durability of his creation that Babar's popularity should have survived the desecration of those early volumes in which his adventures were first recounted. *The Story of Babar* first appeared here in 1934 as a large handsome folio in which de Brunhoff's limpid pictures and handwritten text were carefully arranged on generous pages.

In later editions, though, the book was cut down to almost half its original size, the handwritten text was replaced by conventional typography and the subtleties of the original colour printing were abandoned. Further indignities were to follow: the original story was sliced into three separately published parts, *Babar's Childhood*, *Babar and the Old Lady* and *Babar's Coronation*, both text and illustrations being ruthlessly adapted to accommodate this division. And, as Babar strengthened his popularity thanks to Laurent de Brunhoff's sequels, further tampering took place with the result that Babar's adventures could be variously found as "Beginner Books", as photographic volumes based on a television series, and as a painting book.

Happily, though, Methuen have now rectified these injustices by reprinting the original edition as it was first published, complete with A. A. Milne's preface. The massive book, with its solid boards and superb paper, will come as a revelation to those who only know the truncated Babar.

The pictures and handwritten text form a perfectly harmonious whole and restore to the book a freshness and elegance absent from the later edition. It is an ironic comment on the economic demands of present-day publishing that this straightforward reissue of the first edition should be labelled "The Luxury Edition", a term which might lead one to expect calf binding, vellum pages and a slip-case. It is sad that a reissue of a book in its original format should now be considered a luxury, but we must be grateful none the less for the sight of Babar in his original finery, and hope that the publishers of Little Tim and Orlando may follow this commendable precedent.

Lance Salway

Spring Bouquet...
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devised & illustrated in full colour by
JOHN S. GOODALL
The newest wordless "Paddy Pork", in which a Mother Cat and her two kittens embark on a boating picnic fraught with peril. (April) £1.50

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LIESEL MOAK SKORPEN
illustrated in three colours by JOAN SANDIN



Gentle, pretty pages tell the story of a small boy who finds a fledgling and teaches him to fly. *(May)* £2.50

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DIANA WYNNE JONES
By the author of *Power of Three*, a comic fantasy about Cat Chant, his sister Gwendolen (a witch) and the very strange goings-on at Chrestomanci Castle. £2.95

The Secret Army
RICHARD HAYES
A school story with a difference, written by a schoolboy for school children. Greyfriars was never like this! *(April)* £2.95

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CAROL PISTORIUS
Bert's dream of owning a pure-bred Borzoi come true, but Karmenka was to need all her strength, intelligence and courage to survive in the wilds of Natal when events conspired to part boy and dog. *Illustrated by Carol Marsle. (May)* £3.25

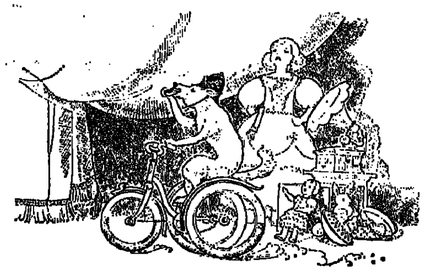
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HILA FEIL
Jessica and Christina seek out a ghost to play with, but discover that ghosts are not always, or perhaps ever, what you think. £2.95

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BARBARA C. FREEMAN
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A concise introduction, written by specialists in each field, to twelve major crafts, with detailed instructions, diagrams and full-colour photographs. £2.95

...from
MACMILLAN LONDON



RICHARD HUGHES
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COLLECTED CHILDREN'S STORIES
Illustrations by Antony Maitland
Taking its title from a new, unpublished story, *The Wonder Dog* draws together two earlier collections, *The Spider's Palace* and *Don't Blame Me!* into a superbly illustrated omnibus edition of Richard Hughes's classic children's stories. In the Preface, the author looks back on fifty years of impromptu story-telling.
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A kidnapping, a murder, a jailbreak . . . a dramatic sequence of events is set in motion when Winnie Foster is saved the trouble of running away from home by being kidnapped, and finds release from her childhood in safe-guarding the Tuck family's unearthly secret.
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Illustrations by Harald Gripe
Elvis Karlsson, the mysterious small boy who first appeared in *Julia's House*, has developed into a character whose charm and individuality inspire comparison with the famous 'Hugo and Josephine' trilogy.
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The Awakening Water was spring water, utterly unlike the sickly liquid John had been brought up on under the watchful eyes of the Party. Cool, clear and undoped, it gave him a new awareness, and impelled him to join the others who had fled from the Party. . . .
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Illustrated by the author
This survey of the national and regional dress to be found in Eastern Europe completes this well-established series.
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The celebrated novelist and poet uses his singular story-telling skills to recreate the past in a sequence of Orkney legends inspired by a cave of blank enchantment in the Bay of Seals. . . . "Delightful to either young or old." *The Scotsman*
144pp £3.25 Ages 11+ *Already Published*

Chatto & Windus

Dark and golden

Grimms' Fairy Tales
Illustrated by Mabel Lucie Attwell
Piccolo. £1.25. (330 24532 5)

OSCAR WILDE :
The Happy Prince
and Other Tales
Illustrated by Charles Robinson
Piccolo. £1.25. (330 24857 X)

The shelves of children's bookshops are laden with editions of Grimms' Fairy Tales. Nevertheless, there seems to be some ambivalence towards the dark violence of the Grimms, whose stories stretch and explore the imagination to a point which is not always comfortable. Fantasy is fashionable, but perhaps we prefer the elves of whimsy to the full-blooded ogres of the subconscious.

Certainly that is what this edition would lead us to believe. Mabel Lucie Attwell's round and coy figures tame the Grimms' power into a safe and cosy vision, which belies their savagery and wild mystery, the fascination of their terror. Somehow, the stories themselves seem emasculated, belittled—the Black Forest tiger turned suburban pussycat. Although his selection includes most of the familiar tales, Edric Vredenburg's editorship has produced an uneasy, over-elaborate prose style, which never allows one to forget that it is a translation, and is larded with archaisms.

Giants commit "rapine", dwarves are "droll"; there is an irregular and largely irrelevant use of "thee" and "thou"; the text allows itself "I ween" when it needs a rhyme for "queen". This language must be inaccessible to children young enough to prefer Mabel Lucie Attwell's illustrations to those of Mervyn Peake or Arthur Rackham. It compares very unfavourably with the vigorous and lucid style of Heiner Bastian's translation for David Hockney, or with that of Lore Segal for Maurice Sendak's superb illustrations. It is an edition for those who like their Grimm house-trained.

There is no conflict between savagery and sentiment in Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. Here, elegant melancholy is coupled with light and sardonic moralizing; the pathos is luxuriant, but strictly acceptable. The book is beautifully produced, with Charles Robinson's very fine illustrations emphasizing the langour and whimsy of Wilde's stories.

Between the colour plates, poppies, cypress trees and cloud-castles grow in the margins, and chubby but limp-wristed cherubs toddle and lounge along the title pages. A feast, for enthusiasts of the fin-de-siècle. Wilde, however, rescues us from the sickliness of his voluptuous sentiment by his irony, his self-mockery, and his sudden prosaic endings. The student in "The Nightingale and The Rose", listening to the bird sing "like water bubbling from a silver jar", remarks:

> She has form, that cannot be denied her; but has she got feeling? I am afraid not. In fact, she is like most artists; she is all style without any sincerity."

And at the end of "The Devoted Friend"—an extended homily on conditional friendship, told by the Linnet to the Water-rat—

> . . . "I am rather afraid that I have annoyed him," answered the Linnet. "The fact is, that I told him a story with a moral." "Ah! that is always a very dangerous thing to do," said the Duck. And I quite agree with her.

Molly Parkin

Design for living

BARBARA PATERSON :
Help!
Starting Out on Your Own
Illustrated by Graham Round
Peacock. £1. (14 047088 3)

There is a chocolate commercial currently on television in which an optimistic young person is packing her case in heady preparation to leaving home. Her mother, tense and unhappy, is helping her. It is a highly charged situation, the umbilical cord is being twitched; but emotions remain controlled until the throat-catching moment when devious old mum slyly shoves in the Mackintosh's Quality Street among all the nicely folded knicks; then the blubbing begins.

It is a small enough offering, but in times of stress all that is needed to relieve the tension can be a comforting soft-centre. Given the choice between a Hazelnut Fudge and the advice handed out in *Help!*, a new Peacock intended for "starting out on your own", I know which I would prefer.

Help! is a practical handbook, compiled by Barbara Paterson, aimed at young people who are leaving the warm womb of home. Much of the information included has apparently been gained through personal and painful experience by the author, who hopes that the book will make starting off on their own a little less traumatic for others. I doubt if it will, though I can see how anyone would decide that it was a good idea for a book. And Barbara Paterson has done a good job of collecting together a fair number of addresses, though irritatingly not their telephone numbers, that may be of use. Like the Narrow Foot League, for instance, and Gamblers Anonymous, and Un-careers. Not to mention the Common Cold Research Unit, as an idea for cost-free, restful holidays for young folk. But perhaps I am not doing *Help!* full justice.

It is a research job, in essence, and once you get past the contents page with its off-putting, bland and breezy subtitling such as "Ship Shape and Bristol Fashion" and "TV or Not TV" under the main heading "Home Sweet Home", or "Cleaning up a Kitchen Chaos" under "Nourishing Nosh", there is plenty of practical advice. The heart of Barbara Paterson is in the right place, but hers is a cautionary nature. The principle of the book is that you should look after yourself, in a practical and physical sense. It is fairly basic stuff—if you foul your own nest, no one else can be expected to clear it up. But beyond that she tends to come unhitched:

> "I am suspicious of her generalizations regarding friendship — "Real friendship exists only between people who at heart feel themselves equal" — and sex, though it is reassuring to read the index and note "venereal diseases" slotted in between "vegetables" and "vermouth". But I am afraid that the editorial guidance lacks the imaginative resource to lift the spirit and soul of the young adult.
>
> "Living involves choosing", writes Barbara Paterson. It does indeed, but I for one would not choose *Help!* to arm the frail warriors in their fight for independence. They would learn infinitely more from those contemporary novels where the information included has also been gained through personal and painful experience by the author, and which are written by the young or about the trials of youth. Those are life-enhancing as opposed to being simply sensible. And what is more they have humour, which *Help!* is sadly short on. How about *Candy, Portnoy's Complaint, The Dud Avocado, Billy Liar, Lucky Jim*, Beryl Bainbridge's *Sweet William*, Dodie Smith's *I Capture the Castle*, Martin Amis's *The Rachel Papers* and *Dead Babies*, Ian McEwan's *First Love, Last Rites* and Phillip Norman's novel *Plumridge*? They should do as a start towards reassuring self-enlightenment for those starting out on their own. That is what I would choose to give, not a handy-fact manual, though I might slip in the odd chocolate toffee.

Molly Parkin

A new series of Peacock Books have been launched by Penguins. The titles include *First Love*, by Ivan Turgenev, *The Millstone*, by Margaret Drabble, *True Grit*, by Charles Portis, and *The Summer after the Funeral*, by Jane Gardam.

Satomi Ichikawa
From Morn to Midnight
A collection of twenty poems chosen by Elaine Moss for young children, ranging from Stevenson, Blake and Eleanor Farjeon to new and unfamiliar material. Satomi Ichikawa's charmingly designed pages, in rich colours, bring a new dimension to the verses. £2.90

Colin McNaughton and Elizabeth Attenborough
Walk Rabbit Walk
A picture book for the very young about a rabbit who likes to walk, and his friends, who like to dash about the countryside in a variety of machines. Colin McNaughton's illustrations are witty and beautiful, and the clear handlettered text tells the story in a few words. £2.40

Janet and Allan Ahlberg
Burglar Bill
Burglar Bill is surely the jolliest and most lovable burglar in fiction. Children will enjoy spotting all the things he has stolen – and watching him put them all back when a nasty experience makes him see the error of his ways. A gorgeous story, with comic pictures delightfully full of detail. £2.40

Robin and Jocelyn Wild
The Bears' ABC Book
An ABC in story form. Three little bears play in a dump, finding such treasures as an old bicycle and a broken vacuum cleaner. With its softly coloured crayon drawings, this is an enchantingly amusing picture book. £2.50

John Sewell
Professor Invento and
His Best Invention
Professor Invento is a lonely old inventor whose latest invention takes him by surprise. A picture-story book with enormous appeal for older children, who will get as much fun out of the jokey text as they will from the gloriously detailed pictures. £2.50

Heinemann Young Books

Selective appeal

These four well-bound books have a definitely contemporary look about them. Their stories are told in a refreshingly clear and direct way; the vocabulary used is varied and often witty and there is no element of any twee or patronizing tone. The illustrations are imaginative and charming, they would appeal at once to the adult selecting the book and to the child who would want to look at them repeatedly; the illustrations are not an extra, they are an integral part of each work.

Das U-Boot Fritz would delight any child between two and four. The story of this colourful submarine is told in rhyming couplers, with a full-page picture facing each four-line stanza. Fritz inadvertently finds himself surrounded by whales —frightening and yet funny as they cleave the blue and green striped waters. They have bright green bodies and gleaming regular teeth and white spray adorns their heads. Fritz is seen to be very small between these amusing yet awesome monsters—he is in danger but instinctively a child would know that such a cheeky brightly coloured character could not be defeated. Indeed he is not, his periscope turns into wings and it is Fritz who has the last laugh.

Elefanteneinmaleins, another book for very young children, has delightful black-and-white illustrations, but the story is extremely unattractive. The elephant learns to do sums by counting the "elephant pats" he produces in great quantity—he is an elephant with an insatiable appetite. This lavatorial humour is also used to put across to a child the concept of the acceptance of old age which eventually leads to death.

In *Der ist Ganz Anders Als Ihr Glaubt* elephants are again the chief characters. A mother, whose small son Bernd has been persuaded by rumour to fear a harmless old vegetable seller, tells the boy a tale about the elephant-world. In it there is an "ogre-elephant" who turns out to be a friend to a mischievous baby elephant, when he becomes separated from the herd. This is an ideal bedtime story which would amuse any adult who reads it. It has a happy ending and its moral is that once you trust people, they are no longer frightening and are indeed "Quite different from what you believed"—the title of the book.

Michael hat einen Seemann is, to me, the most attractive of the collection and well deserves the three prizes awarded to it in Austria for its letterpress, plot and for the original and appealing illustrations. Michael is an endearingly ugly little boy. He is timid; frightened of the spiders and mice he is convinced inhabit the basement, he is afraid of turning somersaults on the playground bar and slinks off on his own in case the other children think him a coward. His life is changed when a kindly, pipe-smoking bearded man with a distinctly nautical look feigns surprise when he hears that Michael does not have "a seaman of his own". Since the adult, impressive Mr Jakobetz, claims that he has a seaman, Michael concludes that it would in no way diminish his "manhood" if he acquired one too. The imaginary companion can be conjured up as spectator, friend and confidant. There are many stories where children have magic playmates, but this seaman is unusual—he is no fairy-creature, he performs no magic but he inspires this goggle-eyed little boy with confidence and opens up new realms of imagination for him. Michael learns that he only has to close his eyes to see the sea. The picture to illustrate Michael's vision of the ocean is enchanting and a child would get endless pleasure from recognizing and counting the motley collection of people and objects inhabiting these blue waters. The author solves the problem of "disposing" of the seaman cleverly. Michael, and by implication any reader, is able to face reality bravely, knowing that his friend will always exist somewhere and he can be seen sitting on the masthead of his boat from where he waves encouragingly.

Marietta Caspari

JAMES KRUSS and AIGA RASCH: *Das U-Boot Fritz*. Stuttgart: Boje. (3 414 14070 5)

HELME HEINE: *Elefanteneinmaleins*. Hannover: Middelhauve. (3 7876 9620 2)

MIRA LOBE and SUSI WEIGEL: *Der ist Ganz Anders Als Ihr Glaubt*. Vienna: Jungbrunnen. (3 7026 5320 1)

WOLF HARRANTH: *Michael hat einen Seemann*. Illustrated by Josef Palecek. Vienna: Jungbrunnen. (3 7026 5180 2)

Bowdlerized Brobdingnag

HEINZ KOSOK :
Lemuel Gullivers Deutsche Kinder Weltliteratur als Jugendbuch
Wuppertal-Barmen: Peter Hammer. (3 87294 2085)

His Majesty gave Orders, upon Pain of Death, that every Soldier in his March should observe the strictest Decency, with regard to my Person; which, however, could not prevent some of the younger Officers from turning up their Eyes as they passed under me. And, to confess the Truth, my Breeches were at that Time in so ill a Condition, that they afforded some Opportunities for Laughter and Admiration.

Now one of the key passages from *Gulliver's Travels*, perhaps, but it would present grave problems to a Dr Bowdler (not to say the begetter of the Breeches Bible) anxious to protect the minds of the young and impressionable from areas of life which, in the words of C. S. Lewis, are "much better understood by schoolboys than by psycho-analysts".

In his slim book, Heinz Kosok raises a number of important issues relative to the emasculation of great literature in the cause of rendering it fit for consumption by the young, and employs by way of illustration Swift's famous and-tra-la-la-lone and the fifteen versions for children currently available in the German bookshop. *Gulliver's Travels* is inherently attractive to children, in that it demands an initial act of faith in accepting an implausible situation; but, once accepted, the action is developed with complete inner consistency and credibility. In many respects, the novel reflects the experiences of the child, especially in its first two parts, to which the versions under consideration devote their exclusive attention, where Lilliput resembles the world of toys and play, and Brobdingnag is close to the world of adults.

Kosok has some points of detailed criticism to direct at the editions prepared for German children, from mistranslations which have Gulliver's ship anchoring on the dunes in Kent ("in the Downs") to an anachronistic Union Jack being hoisted in an illustration of the same ship. But such minor aberrations pale before what he regards as the two most serious defects of these versions. In the first place, the complete excision of the two latter parts of *Gulliver's Travels* results in a one-sided presentation of the narrator, an over-accentuation of his positive views and a serious dilution of his increasing pessimism and despair at man and society; and, in the second place, the picture of Gulliver as presented in the first two parts of the novel is itself distorted by his editors and translators. Not only are the defects in his breeches patched over, and other episodes such as Gulliver's copious use of his full bladder as a fire extinguisher on the Lilliputian palace—largely distorted or omitted, but the significance of Gulliver himself is reduced to that of a mere story-teller with no real shape or substance. Much of his fascination derives from his ambivalent status: the reader is lured into sympathizing and identifying, and then Swift springs the trap on our own weaknesses and vanities as reflected in Gulliver; but of that multi-dimensionality in the novel there is little or no trace in these mutilated versions, let alone of the series of contrasts on which the novel is founded, and which lead Gulliver to adopt his relativistic stance:

> Undoubtedly Philosophers are in the Right when they tell us, that nothing is great or little otherwise than by Comparison: It might have pleased Fortune to let the Lilliputians find some Nation, where the People were as diminutive with respect to them, as they were to me.

This is considered as far too strong stuff for the fragile mind of the child, and is consequently excluded as "irrelevant" to the story.

Kosok recognizes that some parts of the novel—contemporary references to Whigs, Tories and the like which have lost most of their significance now—can indeed be omitted without the work suffering serious damage; but his principal conclusion merits serious attention, namely that by watering down the classics into a thin gruel of fairy-tale-cum-adventure story, the child is excluded from the full richness of a novel like *Gulliver's Travels* and grows up with a distorted, and probably negative, view of the great works of European literature.

Rex Last

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Exotic ingredients

PATRICIA WRIGHTSON (Editor) :
Emu Stew
An Illustrated Collection of Stories and Poems for Children
Kestrel. £3.95. (7226 5169 4)

A garish cover and a title borrowed from a trendy children's television series: automatically (though perhaps unfairly) one's heart sinks, one fears the worst. But the cover belies the pleasant and indeed sophisticated illustrations within, and the blurb on the inside flap offers a coy but not inaccurate explanation: a stew is a mixture of ingredients, a sort of culinary anthology—ergo, this children's anthology is to be regarded as a sort of literary stew. It is also true, however, that a stew is often named after one predominant ingredient or flavour, which permeates the whole; here, that ingredient is clearly emu, or (to speak in plain terms) Australian; and a curiously all-pervasive relish it proves to be, almost masking the diversity of the other ingredients.

The stories and poems here collected by a well-known Australian children's writer are, I should guess, aimed at an audience of eleven or twelve-year-olds. The collection is obviously intended to include both exotic and familiar materials: Aborigine, Far Eastern and African folk-tales alternate with stories of suburban family life; poems about fantastic monsters with others about cows and rabbits. But almost at once, for an English reader, a feeling of uneasiness sets in: the suburbs turn out to be thickly planted with gum trees, the Clever Rabbit in the poem is, mysteriously, involved with a Dingo—and how many English children, nowadays, grow up on familiar terms with Yellow Dog Dingo? Kipling did at least offer an image to the mental eye. But of course all this was meant for Australian children; to them, probably, it is crystal clear. Meanwhile, one finds oneself irritatedly searching for the glossary; even a map of Australia would help.

A naturally bookish child may well take such puzzles as they come, and be simply carried along by the rhythm and pace of song and story. And there is much here that is excellent, much that will nourish both mind and heart and that will also expand the imagination. Irene Gough's short poems linger in the memory, as do those of Lydia Pender, while some of the nonsense verse echoes the ilk of Edward Lear himself. The Japanese legend of "The Buddha and the Whale", very simply told, is compassionate as well as funny; "Ilg Boys' Work", set in a Zulu kraal, has something genuine and important to say about the longing to grow up and count for something in the real world. (But why—if the cultural net is going to be cast so wide—no European or American-Indian stories? Too far from Australia, perhaps—that emu flavour again.) Of the less exotic tales, "Mr Pickley's Best Bargain", with its science-fiction approach, is perhaps the funniest, "Grandpa's House" among the most satisfying.

But, if the ingredients are varied, their quality is also patchy. Dorothy Henry's poem "Love" is unpleasingly reminiscent of Patience Strong; certain stories, such as "My Simple Little Brother Harry and the Charge Account", have a smug cruelty about them. Others, though in themselves good, are not bedtime reading: to an imaginative child, some of the Aborigine myths would be rather more frightening than the goriest television series. All in all, perhaps a book for selective reading aloud, preferably by an Australian relative skilled in explaining the mysteries of billabongs and gounnas, mulga and Christmas beetles.

Eva Gillies

Raising a laugh

AIDAN CHAMBERS :
Funny Folk
A Book of Comic Tales
Illustrated by Trevor Stubley
Heinemann. £3.50. (434 93161 6)

Funny Folk, A Book of Comic Tales, is a title that may put off those who like their humour throwaway and distrust the folksy. Well, fair's fair, Aidan Chambers admits everything and calls himself an amateur folklorist. Which is not, please note, the same as being folksy, but leads one to large questions like: What is folklore? Where does it begin and end? What qualifies a thing as folklore? How old, how new, where from, what sort of (All right, I am only asking: the answers, much too large for a short review, could take one miles into anthropology and religion, and back again into modern life and where its sources of folklore lie.) *Funny Folk* is a collection of folk-tales from all over the place, nearly all of them British, mostly traditional, often regional, occasionally modern, and sometimes expanded from something like a Donald McGill postcard, or a newspaper report.

Full of meat, *Funny Folk* really is funny, and the drawings by Trevor Stubley match it neatly and make it more so (especially his animals, like the pig, the badger, two cats, the goose and the hedgehog that drew a ninety-seven-year-old postmaster from Lisburn to Fermoy in an oyster tub for a bet in 1821 and got him there wearing a red nightcap, with a pig-driver's whip in one hand and a cow's horn in the other, which he blew to announce his coming and encourage his team. If you like that sort of thing, then it's your sort of book). What's good about it is the tone, which gets simple people's speech and rhythms without affectation and a sense of the traditional without strain or folksiness. Plain people here make one laugh through turns of speech rather than action. The action counts, of course, but the telling counts even more so, as folk-tale readers who have yawned over ill-told tellings will agree.

Since folklore, I think I'm right in saying, is the lore of the lower as opposed to the higher, the humble as opposed to the proud, many of the stories are about scoring off the top-dog, getting your own back on authority, the workhouse boy who scares the Master out of his wits by dressing up in a shroud and rising from a coffin, the maid who confounds her silly master, the poor man getting his own back on the greedy.

But some are about people doing silly things in a perfectly pokerfaced way, like the woman who watched the men climbing over the wall at Wormwood Scrubs and thought they were just going out for a change and would soon be back; some are about eccentrics like the people who eat light bulbs and razor blades; some are scoring-off stories, and mind-your-manners stories, and do-as-you-would-be-done-by stories, and so on. Of course funny books are hard to recommend in a general way, notions of funniness being as variable as they are, as peculiar to this or that person and temperament; but I can easily see this being a source book for the sort of jokes some children really love.

Isabel Quigly

Caribbean chronicles

PHILIP SHERLOCK :
The Iguana's Tail
Crick Crack Stories from the Caribbean
Deutsch. £2.25. (233 96687 0)

Crick Crack stories, like Anansi stories, not only illustrate the richness of Caribbean folklore and culture, they also reflect the resilience of the African cultural heritage which exists in the Caribbean, side by side with that of Europe. They are animal stories which were brought to the Caribbean by African slave labour and which have increased in popularity among both children and adults over the centuries. *The Iguana's Tail* is a selection of six of these delightful stories by Philip Sherlock, distinguished West Indian scholar and folklorist, which takes us into "a world where animals speak and think and laugh like human beings". It is simply and relevantly illustrated by Gioia Fiammenghi. The stories are, for the longer part, explanatory in nature: they tell us why the Donkey has long ears and the Mosquito buzzes; why the Pelican is such a good fisherman and how Tortoise came by his cracked and jagged shell; and, like many folk-tales the world over, each story usually has a moral.

Philip Sherlock tells the stories with charm and imagination. There is drought on the land and a small group of forest dwellers—Green Parrot, Little Capuchin Monkey, Hacka Tiger, Chimpanzee, Brown Owl, Armadillo and not forgetting Firefly—set out in search of more fertile ground for their new home. At the end of each day's journey, during an afternoon's respite, the animals gather together and each animal takes its turn to tell a Crick Crack story. "Crick crack", one claims the story teller at the beginning of each story; "Break my back", replies the animals, and the teller goes into his story. At the end of the story he will say, "Wire bend", and the listeners will say, "story end". The stories entertain the animals and help to keep up their sagging spirits during the long and arduous trek. And there is a continuous line of suspense through out the journey, and throughout the book, as Hacka Tiger draws closer and closer to Iguana, awaiting his chance to pounce upon her and slake his sharp teeth into her succulent flesh.

Philip Sherlock has here made a significant contribution to Caribbean folklore by rendering these oral tales into literary form without any significant loss in the transition. In doing so he has made them available to a much wider audience, an important section of which are those children born in Britain of Caribbean parents, cut off from the cultural roots of their parents and yet often living in a Caribbean subcultural environment. For these children, books like *The Iguana's Tail* go a long long way towards filling an enormously wide gap.

Linton Kwesi Johnson



PIERO VENTURA'S
THE VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS

This book, which will be presented at the Bologna Book Fair, is the first in a series dedicated to the great explorers of the past, superbly illustrated in full colour by Piero Ventura, the well-known author of children's books. "The Voyage of Columbus" is more than an adventure story well told: educating as well as entertaining with lively yet accurate descriptions and illustrations of life at sea; of the inhabitants and lands visited; of the plants and crops discovered and the impact of these new species on the economy of Europe.
In preparation, Ventura's "The Travels of Marco Polo", complete by the end of 1977.

Arnoldo Mondadori Editore

Solace for spring

Despite — or some would say because of—the economic recession picturebooks of indifferent quality are still flowing from the presses this spring. But from the consumer's point of view, and by consumer for the moment I mean the hard-up school and library, spring 1977 also suffers solace: three books, all small and all under £2, clamour to be bought.

All three originated in the United States and one is in full colour with illustrations by Maurice Sendak. This is Ruth Krauss's *Charlotte and the White Horse*. It was first published in New York in 1955. As a new publication in London this year it is not only a bargain but a revelation: for here is Sendak at his most lyrical, gently fusing the elements of a story that in its manner of writing teeters uncertainly on the brink of sentimentality and self-indulgence into a whole book (he has hand-lettered the text) that children will respond to as they respond to *Mr Rabbit and the Lovely Present*. The dreamlike awe and wonder of childhood, the passion with which a small girl can devote herself to a new-born colt, these are the elements of gladness in a story in which Charlotte's father's attempt to sell the white horse is the sadness. "Now just sorrow is coming in", says Ruth Krauss, somewhat elliptically. Without Sendak's genius for conveying emotion through colour and form the story would have been weak-kneed as the foal itself; through his genius the book transcends its strange text and embodies the magic of spring.

The other two books are prosaic by comparison but not to be missed by the library buyer. Indeed Arnold Lobel's *Owl at Home*, a tawny successor to the weed-green "Frog and Toad" books, has probably been eagerly awaited by many. Not since Minarik's "Little Bear" books have the children who can just read had such classic stories placed within their grasp, stories that are simply, humorously, nonchalantly whimsical, yet written in simple language and illustrated with pictures that complement them by pointing up the fun. There are five stories in this book, printed in large well-spaced type; "Tear-water Tea" is the most moving because in it Owl must cry to fill his kettle, and in order to cry he must think lovely sad thoughts.

Eve Rice follows the success of *Oh Lewis!* last year with *New Blue Shoes*—a title that will surely make phonics addicts turn their flash cards to the wall. This is again a very simple story about an expedition: Rebecca needs new shoes. She chooses, after over-careful consideration and an embarrassingly obstinate insistence on colour, blue ones. Halfway home she wonders whether blue is right for *her* feet. Her exhausted mother makes an absurd suggestion: "Do you suppose there is a store nearby that sells new feet?" Mothers, and authors, with this kind of inner certainty are rare.

In *Burnie's Hill* the traditional chant has been illustrated, line by line, by Erik Blegvad in water-colour pictures of "the mousie in her housie", of fire, water, snow and thaw that resemble his landscapes for *The Winter Bear*. He has a gift for catching moments of change—watery sunshine, quick thaw—which makes his picture-books a joy to look at, pore over and discuss with the very young. *When the Wind Stops* is a book of questions asked and answered in Charlotte Zolotow's text and illustrated with line drawings by Howard Knotts. "Where does the sun go when the day ends? . . . Nothing ends. It only begins in another place or in a different way." That is the theme, nature self-renewing; although the role played by autumn leaves in spring's burgeoning is discussed, death is not.

But in *Maurice Maeterlinck's Blue Bird* which Brian Wildsmith has turned into a rich and lustrous book this season, the children Mytyl and Tyltyl explore the essence of life, the soul of things, more deeply as they visit time that has gone (when their grandparents were alive) and time that is to come (where children yet unborn are preparing for life) during their quest for the blue bird which they find, bluer and more vivid because of their greater understanding of the meaning of being, in their own home when they return. The story, with its emphasis on the spirit, is not exactly a gift to the illustrator and Brian Wildsmith's picturebook jumps from naturalism, in his paintings of the woodcutter's hut, to fantasy in his representation of the spirit of, for example, milk, and geometry which he uses skilfully in colourful designs to convey his conception of the Palace of Night. In the film version of *Blue Bird*, on which Brian Wildsmith has been working for many years, transitional sequences will presumably help the eye to travel more easily from one kind of image to the other.

No such problem arises in Herbert Holzing's art work for Otfried Preussler's story *The Green Bronze Bell*. This beautiful book has clear colour illustrations that have the appearance of stamped wood blocks and are particularly effective on pages where the blacksmith's tools and the keys, locks, scythes and horse-shoes stand out against a white background. The story is vivid and memorable. A small village has a church bell with special quality in its tone. The Tsar covets the bell but when his men and horses try to heave it away from the village it becomes too heavy to move. The smith is therefore ordered by the Tsar to destroy it and scatter its fragments on the field. Snow covers them. But when it clears in the spring the villagers find hundreds of little green bronze sleigh bells. Of the more expensive picture books this season *The Green Bronze Bell* is the one that has the classic appeal usually associated with traditional tales. But not all folk tales do make good picturebooks for young children. *The Contest* is a traditional tale used as the basis for a picture-book by Nonny Hogrogian. This Armenian story of a fickle girl and the lovers—one who thieved by day and other by night—whom she played off against each other, is a sophisticated laugh which offered the artist an opportunity for creating decorative borders, sensitive line drawings and beguiling chalky character sketches. Be not beguiled—unless you are buying a picturebook for older children, in which case *The Contest* has much to offer.

Little Blue and Little Yellow by Leo Leonni is as simple, on the surface, as a picturebook could be. When Little Blue and Little Yellow, two roughly circular shapes, play together they become Little Green: problems of identity ensue when both Blue and Yellow parents reject Little Green, but all ends happily with a multi-coloured (multi-racial?) society. Mendelian geneticists may quibble at the scientific simplifications, but the message is clear.

The paraphernalia of illness is attractive to children so *I Don't Feel Well!* by Franz Brandenberg, illustrated by Aliki, with its emphasis on thermometers, meals in bed, being read to and get-well cards will win many hearts. The little cat characters (familiar from *No School Today*, etc) are here seen flushed under the whiskers and droppy-eyed, lapping up adult attention until the day when bed suddenly seems boring and washing-up a welcome alternative. The text of this book is set in large type, two or three lines under each picture.

Janet and Allan Ahlberg are now well known for their "Brick Street Boys" cartoon stories. In *Burglar Bill* they extend their considerable talents for off-beat humour in a picturebook with a long text that turns out to be as moral as it is entertaining. Burglar Bill steals a box with holes in it and discovers to his horror that he has also stolen a baby. By happy accident the baby's mother, a widow lady called Burglar Betty, burgles Burglar Bill. He catches her, in more senses than one. There is an Alf Dubbitt ring to the dialogue and the denouement, a series of pictures in which Bill and Betty *return their* ill-gotten gains to the rightful owners before starting a new life, is happy nonsense.

The same can be said of Roger Duvoisin's new "Petunia"—*Petunia's Treasure*, in which she silly goose discovers that riches do not bring happiness; about Louis de Horna's *The Prince who Learned how to Make Bread*, in which a spoiled young man comes to realise that idleness is annihilating and craftsmanship exhilarating; and about Terry Furchgott and Linda Dawson's *Phoebe and the Hot Water Bottles* in which a chemist's granddaughter's absurdly huge collection of hot water bottles suddenly becomes useful. In *Farmer Barnes Fells a Tree* Joan Hickson's clear line and colour drawings illustrate another Cunliffe countryside dilemma: this time a diseased tree falls in the wrong direction when felled and causes severe traffic problems on the lane.

Among the alphabets Deborah Niland's *A B C of Monsters* will please children because it is monstrously humorous; adult cognoscenti, however, will compare it unfavourably with Sendak's *Alligators All Around* of which, in text and illustration, it is but a pale imitation.

The rest are picturebooks in form only. Berniece Freschet's *Grizzly Bear* is the story of a bear cub's early months and the hazards from which his mother must try to protect him; Donald Carrick illustrates an excellent text with low-key watercolours. *The Day of the Diprotodon* by Olaf Ruhen is for older dinosaur addicts and is about the prehistoric ancestors of modern Australian fauna; Peter Pavey's sepia cross-hatched pictures are rather gloomy but do give the overall impression of landscape's relationship to early forms of life on earth. The two William Kurelek books, *A Prairie Boy's Winter* and *A Prairie Boy's Summer*, are also concerned with the relationship of landscape to life: William Kurelek's paintings, of work and pastimes on the Canadian flat lands, and the text that goes with them, do for Canada in the 1930s what Helen Bradley's "Miss Carter" books did for Edwardian England.

Elaine Moss

Ruth Krauss: *Charlotte and the White Horse*. Illustrated by Maurice Sendak. Bodley Head. £1.75. (370 30012 2)
Arnold Lobel: *Owl at Home*. World's Work. £1.80. (437 90100 9)
Evi Rice: *New Blue Shoes*. Bodley Head. £1.95. (370 01803 6)
Erik Blegvad: *Burnie's Hill*. Collins. £2.95. (00 195070 3)
Charlotte Zolotow: *When the Wind Stops*. Illustrated by Howard Knotts. World's Work. £2.10. (437 89510 6)
Brian Wildsmith: *Maurice Maeterlinck's Blue Bird*. Oxford University Press. £2.95. (19 278114 8)
Otfried Preussler: *The Green Bronze Bell*. Illustrated by Herbert Holzing. Hamish Hamilton. £2.95. (241 89548 X)
Nonny Hogrogian: *The Contest*. Hamish Hamilton. £1.80. (241 89577 4)
Leo Leonni: *Little Blue and Little Yellow*. Hodder and Stoughton. £2.25. (340 03576 5)
Franz Brandenberg: *I Don't Feel Well!* Illustrated by Aliki. Hamish Hamilton. £2.90. (241 89576 6)
Janet and Allan Ahlberg: *Burglar Bill*. Heinemann. £2.40. (434 92500 4)
Roger Duvoisin: *Petunia's Treasure*. Bodley Head. £2.50. (370 01812 5)
Leo de Horna: *The Prince Who Learned How to Make Bread*. Translated by Arthur Bell. Anderson Press. £2.75 (905478 04 5)
Terry Furchgott: *Phoebe and the Hot Water Bottles*. Illustrated by Linda Dawson. Deutsch. £2.75. (233 96860 1)
John Cunliffe: *Farmer Barnes Fells a Tree*. Illustrated by Joan Hickson. Deutsch. £2.25. (233 96852 0)
Deborah Niland: *ABC of Monsters*. Hodder and Stoughton. £1.75. (340 20985 2)
Berniece Freschet: *Grizzly Bear*. Illustrated by Donald Carrick. World's Work. £2.90. (437 26550 1)
Olaf Ruhen: *The Day of the Diprotodon*. Illustrated by Peter Pavey. Hodder and Stoughton. £2.95. (340 20716 7)
William Kurelek: *A Prairie Boy's Summer* (00 183751 6); *A Prairie Boy's Winter* (00 183752 4). Collins. £3.50 each.

New non-fiction



Merry Ever After
Written and illustrated by Joe Lasker
A richly detailed account of two mediaeval weddings at opposite ends of the social scale. The superb colour illustrations are reminiscent of the paintings and manuscripts of the time.
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Beverley Halstead
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People and Politics
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Socialism Richard Evans
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Children's Books of the Year: 1976
Elaine Moss
Published in association with the National Book League, this annotated list is a 'must' for everyone interested in children's books.
July £2.00

New picture books
New books by three of Britain's leading artists will be published in the autumn:
Fungus the Bogeyman by Raymond Briggs
Panda's Puzzle by Michael Foreman
King of the Golden River by Krystyna Turska

Hamish Hamilton
Bologna Book Fair Stand G56

Well-furnished memories

WILLIAM FEAVER:
When We Were Young
Two Centuries of Children's Book Illustration.
Thames and Hudson. £2.95.
(500 27075 9)

It is impossible for adults to assess children's book illustrations from the point of view of the child. If the pictures belong to books that we read and re-read as children we see them in a heightened way; they are invested with old fantasies, old fears or old comforts. Our response is as irrational, as incomprehensible to the innocent bystander, as any other infatuation. This proves, if proof were needed, the vital importance of illustrations: as William Feaver says in his introductory text to *When We Were Young*, his survey of two centuries of children's book illustration, one of the ends that the pictures serve is to "furnish memories".

Well-furnished memories are a prey to nostalgia. One person may only have to look at Edmund Dulac's picture for "The Princess and the Pea" of the princess in her four-poster, perched languidly on a great pile of feather mattresses and eiderdowns, for all objective criticism to go by the board. Another only has to see Leslie Brooke's line drawings of foolishly dignified animals for *Johnny Crow's Garden* to see them streaked with the wax-crayon "colouring-in" that decorated his own copy. A grandmother may besottedly show her two-year-old grandson the pictures from her own old Florence K. Upton books about Dutch dolls and golliwogs, while he, though enchanted by the attention paid him, vainly searches the pictures for aeroplanes or bicycles. It is not a question of sentimentality on the adults' part so much as involuntary regression; and the impulse to pass on valuable things, whether they be nursery memories or stocks and shares. (This is a rather up-market book.)

The three examples cited are among those reproduced in Mr Feaver's book, which is admirably unsentimental in approach. He links the development in illustration with the available technology, with the development of the toy industry, and even with adult fashions: for as he says of Walter Crane, "one could assume that every item he showed was available from Liberty's shop in Regent Street". He has a succinct way of summarizing accurately the essence of successful characterizations: Ernest Shepard's Mole, Rat and Toad for *The Wind in the Willows* are "thoroughly Edwardian Thames Valley types", and Krazy Kat, whose career dates from 1910, is "nothing more than a roaming ego". He has selected 123 illustrations, ranging from Blake and Bewick to John Minton, Edward Ardizzone, and the arrival of television characters; for "perspective's sake" he ends his survey at 1950, though the final plate is one of Maurice Sendak's pictures for *In the Night Kitchen*, 1971. He includes much that is familiar and much, particularly from Europe and America, that is not. Yet it is hard for an adult to assess properly even those pictures which do not belong to his own childhood, for one brings to them aesthetic criteria, acquired tastes, and acquired "good taste", which prejudge the issue.

One needs to do a little consumer research. What children seem to dislike most is any disparity of detail between picture and text. That "conspiracy" between author and illustrator, between illustrator and child", described by Mr Feaver as obtaining in the best books, does not always prevail. (The conspiracy is at its thickest when the author is able to illustrate his own books—Edward Lear and Beatrix Potter, for example.) Children are literal and rather stern. They are irritated if a church, say, which is described as having a tower is drawn with a steeple. Nor do they really like stories to be illustrated by photographs. If in this case there is the slightest disparity between picture and text, or between picture and imagination, the authority of the photograph is such that text and imagination are discredited, which is disturbing.

Style is immaterial to children. Intricate realistic detail fascinates, as in Francis Bedford's "The Village Store" from E. V. Lucas's *The Book of Shops* (1899), Francis Bedford was an architect turned illustrator, and specialized, as Mr Feaver puts it, in "Garden Suburb idylls". In "The Village Store" every item on the crowded shelves is identifiable: pails and other hardware hang from the ceiling, and fruit and graded eggs in boxes litter the floor. You can even read the wholesaler's name stencilled on a crate of oranges—it is F. D. Bedford, the artist's signature. At the opposite extreme are rough, schematic drawings such as, for example, those by Dick Hart for Elizabeth Stucley's *Magnolia Buildings* (not reproduced in Mr Feaver's book) which are on the way to being Rorschach blots for the reader's idea of the characters. These too a child readily accepts, though they might not attract an adult; indeed, the illustrations chosen by Mr Feaver are all, in no pejorative sense, impositions.

Nor does a child even have to like the illustrations if they seem to him "right". And they must be seen at the time of first reading the story, not after. Everyone as a child has the experience of reading something first in an unillustrated edition, and then later coming across an edition with pictures. It is too late. Imagination has already gone to work, and the artist's ideas do not coincide with imagination. The same slight shock occurs when one has grown familiar with a particular set of illustrations—Tenniel's *Alice* pictures, for example—and then comes upon a rival set. It is almost as much of an outrage as it was to be expected to sing "Onward Christian Soldiers" to the wrong tune. "Rightness" is the only criterion. No one, I think, could actually like the pictures in the Arthur Ransome books; but no one would doubt that those big-bottomed children in their dreadful shorts were not "right". They are not represented in *When We Were Young*, yet they are, in their awful way, classics.

Mr Feaver makes the point that many illustrations from the early twentieth-century golden age—the work of Rackham, Dulac, Nielson, among others, all well represented in this book—were not in fact intended primarily for children at all. They were in de luxe gift volumes, "production numbers" kept well out of most children's reach, if only by their price. These are the pictures that we tend most to gloat over today, tired of austerity and functionalism, and they have become the accepted classics, even though the lesser examples are "full of sub-Bakst mannerism and Isadora Duncan fairies". In the end, as he says, it is the fittest, and not the most deserving, that survive. Rupert Bear has been going strong since 1920, surviving the death in 1935 of his original creator. Rupert is in the book; Noddy, who as Mr Feaver remarks has flourished in spite of all high-minded condemnation, is not. Mr Feaver is a connoisseur, and his selection reflects the connoisseur's eye for excellence: and rightly. Noddy and his like survive without any help from anyone, and besides, this book was compiled for adults.

Children, however, are the prime example of people who don't know anything about art but know what they like. "Ideally, I suppose," writes Mr Feaver, "children should illustrate their own books." Not so: fantasy needs something beyond experience to feed on. And even though children's book illustrations are, as he says, chiefly designed to make books "more attractive, impressive, saleworthy", *When We Were Young* shows that in the past two hundred years fantasy has been well served.

Victoria Glendinning



The work of three illustrators reproduced in When We Were Young; *from Arthur Rackham's* Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens, *1906; Edward Burra's* Huckleberry Finn, *1947; and Mary Tourtel's* Rupert: Three Stories of the Little Bear's Adventures, *1930.*

The world of Baba Yaga

Russian Fairy Tales
Collected by Aleksandr Afanas'ev
Translated by Norbert Guterman
Illustrated by Alexander Alexeieff
663pp. Sheldon Press. £6.

"A dragon appeared near Kiev. . . ." Who would not read on from this opening phrase? There are many such splendid beginnings, as well as others of the more conventionally reassuring type—"In a certain kingdom, in a certain land . . ."—in this reprint of a book which first appeared in America in 1945. It is a fat, clearly printed collection of tales gathered by the nineteenth-century Russian lawyer Afanas'ev, with vigorous illustrations by Alexander Alexeieff and a commentary by the distinguished linguist Roman Jakobson. As Jakobson points out, Afanas'ev's method was one of "unsophisticated eclecticism" which would not satisfy modern folklorists — he retouched texts, combined variants, failed to note provenance in many cases, and himself recorded only ten out of the 600 tales he published —but despite these limitations he captured an impressive mass of material, much of it highly entertaining, instructive, or strange. Although Jakobson does not take up the point, some of the tales are quite baffling, seeming to demand interpretation yet resisting all attempts to do so; or they may end with unaccountable abruptness, or move (apparently) from one story to another in the course of the narrative. How far this comes from Afanas'ev's methods is hard to say. It would certainly give fuel to anyone eager to prove the inscrutability of the Russian soul.

Of course we have to remember that only about a third of the Russian tales overlap on those with similar themes from Western Europe, and most of the recurring legendary figures, even if we have heard of them (helped perhaps by Rimsky-Korsakov and Stravinsky), seem to us peculiarly Russian: Baba Yaga, Koshchey the Deathless, the Firebird. There is a wild glamour about such figures: a single feather snatched from the Firebird lights up a room better than many candles, and the witch Baba Yaga has a cartoon-style indestructibility—shove her in a stove, lock her in, cover her up with logs, plaster and tar the opening, and in the very next sentence she had wrenched herself free", the method unrevealed. No shortage of marvels, then, in these tales, and indeed there is a delightful fantasy element which often contributes humour, and sometimes poetry, to the narratives. Ivan the Fool meets a giant "with an enormous moustache, on which hung his mittens, which he was drying thus after the rain". In a tale of the heroic age, the gluttonous Polovtsian dragon-villain Tugarin "put one loaf of bread in one cheek, and another in the other cheek, and then he put a whole swan on his tongue, pushed it in with a pancake, and swallowed everything in one gulp". ("Pushed it in with a pancake" is the devastating touch.) Or the storyteller himself, working round to his exordium and plea for a reward of food and drink, may say: "I was given a horse made of ice, a saddle of turnip, and a bridle of peas. . . ." This fantasy extends to the curious device of the deliberate false start, where a striking but irrelevant introduction is used to catch the listeners' attention. As an example, the story of "The Crane and the Heron" begins:

> There once was an owl, a merry bird was she. She flew and flew, perched on a tree, wriggled her tail, rolled her eyes, and took wing again. She flew and flew, perched on a tree, wiggled her tail and rolled her eyes. . . .

But that's the flourish, just for fun; the real tale has not begun!

And in fact that bird never appears again, and has nothing to do with the story. But the audience has now been held by the Ancient-Mariner-like rolling eyes of the owl (and no doubt of the story-teller, too). It is extraordinary how close we are to another in the course of the narrative. How far this comes from Afanas'ev's methods is hard to say. It would certainly give fuel to anyone eager to prove the inscrutability of the Russian soul.

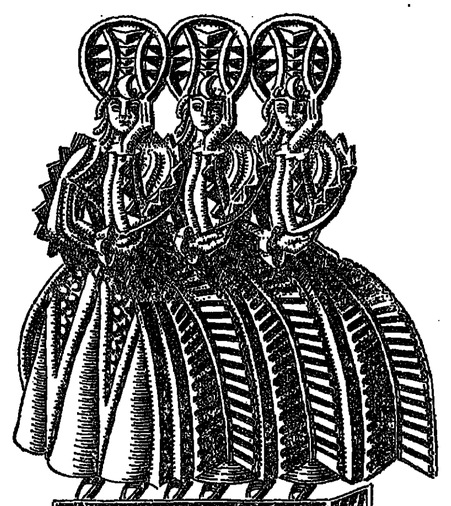
Of course we have to remember that only about a third of the Russian tales overlap on those with similar themes from Western Europe, and most of the recurring legendary figures, even if we have heard of them (helped perhaps by Rimsky-Korsakov and Stravinsky), seem to us peculiarly Russian: Baba Yaga, Koshchey the Deathless, the Firebird. There is a wild glamour about such figures: a single feather snatched from the Firebird lights up a room better than many candles, and the witch Baba Yaga has a cartoon-style indestructibility—shove her in a stove, lock her in, cover her up with logs, plaster and tar the opening, and in the very next sentence she had wrenched herself free", the method unrevealed. No shortage of marvels, then, in these tales, and indeed there is a delightful fantasy element which often contributes humour, and sometimes

> As for the witch, she was tied to the tail of a horse and dragged over a field; where a leg was torn off her, a fire iron stood; where an arm was torn off, a rake stood; where her head was torn off, a bush grew. Birds came swooping down and pecked up her flesh, a wind arose and scattered her bones, and not a trace or a memory was left of her.

In a remarkably grim story, "The One-Eyed Evil", a blacksmith who goes with a friend in search of evil, to find out what it is like, meets a one-eyed witch who roasts his companion in her oven; in revenge he "took an awl, heated it, put it on her good eye, took an axe, and drove in the awl with the butt of it", but vengeance begets vengeance and when she makes another axe stick to his hand he has to hack off his hand to get free; back home he shows his stump "as proof that he had seen evil". Unless the man is boasting at the end of the story (and this is not impossible), the moral would seem to be that one should lead a very careful and incurious life and not tempt the devil.

As in most fairy-tales, morals come and go but do not seem to be the main point. It is true that to some extent, as Roman Jakobson says, "a fairy tale performs the role of a social utopia". Magic control over nature, perhaps painfully gained, may foreshadow processes of change in real life. Marvellous countries, patience and persistence rewarded, living happily ever after—these are certainly recurring features. And it is oddly moving to read last sentences in which we find: "They wedded, and are living to this day." However, one of the strongest characteristics to emerge from the Russian stories is something less euphoric: a reflection of ancient and basic peasant experience, peasant cunning, peasant misery, peasant mockery and humour. "The Cock and the Hen" really says it all. A cock and hen, husband and wife, are gathering nuts for the winter; the cock accidentally knocks the hen's eye out with a nut; some noblemen drive by and ask why the hen is crying. The story then unfolds, by a classic chain-of-circumstance device, how the hen, the cock, the hazel-tree, the goats, the shepherds, the peasant's wife, the peasant's pig, and finally the wolf, are all bound together in an inescapable, unblamable trap: "I was hungry and God told me to eat." The hunger and poverty trap is so crucial that the peasant virtue of cunning at all costs, of survival as the only moral absolute, comes into many of the tales.

"The Bad Wife", "The Nobleman and the Peasant", and "The Peasant, the Bear, and the Fox" present various aspects of this. In the last of these, a peasant is helped by a fox to escape from the unwanted attentions of a bear, but instead of showing gratitude proceeds to set his dogs on the fox. In deceiving, and killing, both bear and fox, he is not meant to be criticized, but rather admired for his ingenuity. In the interesting story "Right and Wrong", a good peasant is very badly treated by a bad peasant (he is blinded, among other things) but after a series of vicissitudes reaches happiness and prosperity (and regains his sight); he meets the bad peasant again, and although he is called "the righteous man" he deliberately and vengefully deceives him, saying he is not angry any more, but sending him nevertheless to a nasty death. There, no doubt, a certain pre-Christian sense of satisfaction is obtained, but it is part of an underlying ruthlessness not uncommon in fairy-tales in general. The most straightforward example of this ruthlessness is "The Fox and the Woodpecker", where the clever fox deprives the stupid woodpecker of her three chicks one by one; no *peripeteia*, no elegy.



"The Wicked Sisters", one of Alexandar Alexeieff's illustrations for Russian Fairy Tales.

Many of the tales occupy fairly standard territory. There are versions of the Cinderella story, there are wicked stepmothers galore, there are despised third sons who turn up trumps, there are maidens playing truant under the hill in fairyland, there are magic shirts, magic words, magic waters of life and death. But the variants catch the eye in a new way. The well-known story of the cock and the fox becomes here "The Fox and the Lobster", but flattery still does the trick: "Aha! cawed the raven, opening her mouth wide, and dropped the lobster into the sea." In "The Three Kingdoms", one of the third-son stories, Ivashko Lion-on-the-Stove is actually helped by Baba Yaga, on this occasion a white witch, to accomplish his mission. Third sons, a fascinating breed, seem up to date as they always were: typed ways, and the Russian tradition of the holy fool tends to combine with this in some of the stories. In "Emelya the Simpleton", for example, the hero unexpectedly saves the life of a pike he is about to cook, and for this is rewarded with a magic power of invocation. "By the pike's command . . .".

A world in which pikes show gratitude, and peasants do not, is indeed a strange one. What would Wordsworth, who so much approved of fairy-tales for the young, have thought of this book? At least it would bring him, as it must bring all its readers, a consistency of wonder and imaginative shock and outlandish delight.

Edwin Morgan

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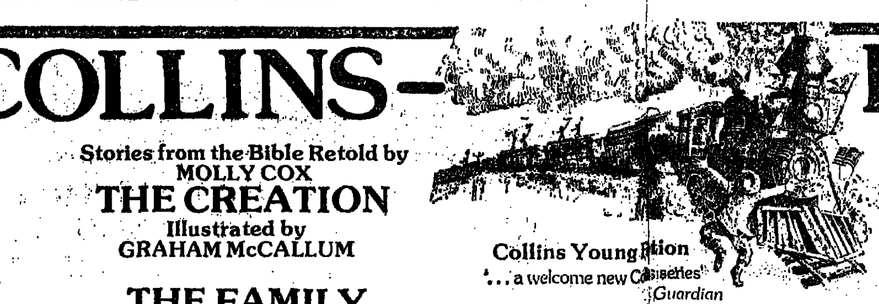
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CHARLES HANHAM :
A Boy in Your Situation
Deutsch. £3.25. (233 96862 8)

We all have one good story in us —the one about ourselves beginning, "when I was young". The natural audience for this tale is the next generation whose curiosity about parents and grandparents constitutes the most valid approach to history. Family stories recreate the public events of forty or sixty years ago in the private detail that sanctioned records have no place for. Yet everyone who was five or over on September 3, 1939 can relate what he or she did on that day in a way that is even more significant than the account that accords with notions of national prestige. The remembrance comes charged with a legacy of feeling which is handed on with the story, so that history begins as a kind of fable until a more objective account takes its place.

Stories for the young about the Second World War have, for a long time, had wide audiences. The impact of Anne Frank's Diary and the example of Ian Serailler's low-key writing in *The Silver Sword* set a tone of reticence others have followed. The very complexity and ambiguity of the larger issues contrasted with the localized experience of evacuation and London bomb-sites contributed to the success of *Fireweed*, *In Spite of All Terror* and *Carrie's War*. For many authors the war coincided with their adolescence, when growing up was the dominant problem and there was no time for it. The subsequent development of children's literature has offered writers both a literary form and an audience for their wartime experiences. Firmly rooted in memory, these stories use the conventions of the novel to enlarge their significance, and "what actually happened" can include "what could also have happened". Truth to the exterior narrative of actual events does not circumscribe imaginative recreation. Autobiography is different. It must stand not as a story, but as some kind of record.

Using a first-person narrator Christine Nöstlinger has turned the events and details of her life in Vienna in 1945 into a kaleidoscope of a story with shifting patterns and colours, and vivid concrete impressions as befits an eight-year-old heroine more inclined to action than to judgment. She engages with life in the muddle left by a defeated army. Her family is looking after a large suburban villa which the Russians occupy. Unpredictable events, dramatic encounters both tragic and comic become the substance of play. Christel's need for friends, food, fun and games is interwoven with hysterical anarchy, the result of the loss of grandparents and the consequences of her father's desertion from the army hospital. The end is a story ending: the motley crew in the villa, a kind of primitive commune by this time, move on to the next stage of European history. The ebullience of the heroine is the pattern in the fictive texture that guarantees continuance and survival. For those who have read accounts of the Second World War only from the English side, this book is a humane corrective.

A Boy in Your Situation is autobiography, although it has a third-person narrator and a strong story line. Charles Hanham has taken serious matters in hand and raised the question about this kind of writing as a variety of story-telling and history.

Born Karl Hartland in Essen in 1925, he is the son of a wealthy Jewish banker whose family and fortune were sequestered by the Nazis. Surrounded in early childhood by the massive solidity of a well-established household that saw itself as a pillar of the community, Karl was indulged and spoilt. He was a fat, rather unattractive child who longed to be liked by his fellows. His self-indulgence resulted in stealing and lies. At secondary school he suffered hideous indignities from boys and masters whose anti-semitism found in the fat boy of the class a legitimate, and resilient victim. Yet the telling is without self-pity, without emotional blackmail. As Karl struggled with homework and tried to understand the preoccupations of his elders, life in Essen became less secure, so that not even money, food, the cinema or his internal fictions could stave off the day of judgment. He left Essen with a label in his buttonhole and came to England, where a short stay in a hostel for Jewish refugees was followed by a period in a farm camp attached to an approved school. His sister, who had preceded him to England and was working as a maid, succeeded in persuading American cousins to pay his boarding-school fees. The last part of the book deals with Karl's adjustment to the ethos of this society. Where he could have expected to be most excluded, he found, at last, that he was most accepted, not as a banker's son, as a Jew, a refugee, but as a person in his own right.

There is no ending, nor any sense of one, for this is that middling ground between life and fiction where experience is shaped to make a pattern of meaning that reflects both external and internal reality. The massive fundamental changes in European consciousness are linked to episodes like Karl's barmitzvah, where his instructor gave him no insight into the relation of his actual situation to the history of the Jews, the eternal refugees. The author's skill in catching the fleeting situation in memorable detail, the way he transposes casual circumstances, like holiday encounters, into the felt life of history, makes this a remarkably vivid account of all growing up. The narrative is the more compelling because it stands away from the reparative accounts of Jewish suffering offered in story form, as in *The Upstairs Room* by Johanna Reiss. There is no attempt to present Karl as the hapless victim of circumstances or as any nicer than he was. In actualizing his childhood in Karl the author has shown a certain scrupulousness, a skilful transfusion of his historical awareness to show how we come to a maturer judgment of ourselves by realizing both our individuality and our common humanity. There is a distinctive role here for autobiography which is not simply the early stages of great men and women, but which reflects, as this book does, the common situation of all its intended readers.

Margaret Meek

Home-less

SUSAN PRICE :
Home from Home
Faber. £2.95. (571 11022 3)

Once again Susan Price has turned her discerning eye on the confused emotions and communication problems of adolescent boys. Although the emphasis is on one boy, brief glimpses of urban and school life hang like a backdrop behind the drama, and so a whole way of living is revealed.

Paul is an annoying enigma to his friends and a disappointment to himself. Conversations with his family are meaningless, or enlightened by the constant background television. His only valuable relationship is with a teacher, Mr Trevor, who lends him books and actually talks to him. The books are one of Paul's escape routes from his squalid home. So, really to oblige Mr Trevor, he finds himself involved with a group called "Active Christians", whose aim is to give practical help to the the aged. Paul is allotted Mrs Maxwell, and they develop a prickly but vital relationship.

Mrs Maxwell becomes more and more dependent on Paul, and he gradually sees her as she once was: not frail and querulous, but young and busy with sons of her own. As she reveals details of her past life, she becomes for him a piece of living history. He learns to respect her and to be tirelessly considerate even with her physical disabilities.

But eventually his concern becomes obsessional; and his methods of making time to be with her and of acquiring things she needs are, to say the least, dubious. When his truancy and pilfering are discovered, only his father shows the slightest understanding. His mother is totally baffled and very angry, until actually confronted by Mrs Maxwell. Finally Paul finds he has gained some insight into his mother's problems, but he has lost the precious private quality of his relationship with Mrs Maxwell.

Cecilia Gordon

Shades of night

ANDRE NORTON (Editor) :
Small Shadows Creep
Chatto and Windus. £2.95.
(7011 5096 3)

ILLA FEIL :
The Ghost Garden
Macmillan. £2.95. (333 21137 5)

Small Shadows Creep, Andre Norton's collection of Ghost Children, sadly fails to live up to its delicately eerie title. The book is a kind of Victorian and Edwardian ghost-train, in which scholarly old gentleman adopt stray children in order to cut their hearts and eat them, dour Essex peasants sacrifice golden-haired little girls as a cure for drought, and any small boy who wants to learn Latin is immediately identifiable as the victim of a spectral old alchemist. However, the stories do provide a fascinating study of outmoded social attitudes. Margery Lawrence's brave, gay young widowed mother believes in the character-building effects of a good spanking. Hugh Walpole's bereaved narrator thinks that true friendship is confined to Britishers, Americans and Scandinavians. "Very few Frenchmen, Italians, or Spaniards, very few Southern people at all, understand these things." H. R. Wakefield provides a nastier frisson than he can have intended when he compares the ritual chant of his child-sacrificing peasants to "a Spiritual", sung by four thousand god-chunk darkies in Georgia". The book ends, delightfully if a little inconsequently, with Eleanor Farjeon's "Faithful Jenny Dove", surely one of the most charming ghost stories ever written.

Judith Woolf

Romantic sense

LYNNE REID BANKS :
My Darling Villain
Bodley Head. £3.25. (370 11034 X)

Seldom can so much good sense have crept into the pages of a romantic novel—for that is what *My Darling Villain* is, and rightly so. The New Adults to whom this book is offered are fortunate in having an author who has not forgotten that at fifteen (the age of her heroine, Kate) life is romance, romance is life. The good sense is an unexpected bonus, more especially because it is never once delivered as a dose of well-intentioned advice but is built in to the character and attitudes of Kate and (surprisingly) her boyfriend, Mark. The story is quite simply about the growth of a relationship between these two—the girl from a family basically kind and supportive but crippled by middle-class prejudice; the boy, aggressive, stubborn and self-willed, at odds with himself as he is with his working-class background. Resolutely the two of them face parental opposition, social stigma, personal jealousies, even death: to none of them will they capitulate. One could argue that their observations on life sometimes show an awareness inconsistent with their years. One could wish that Lynne Reid Banks had been less anxious to knock every known prejudice on the head; not only do class distinctions come under attack but we have to have the nicest possible Jewish family living next door, and best-friend-Emma endlessly boasting about her Lesbian godmother—nor is that the end. But some forgive ungrudgingly an author with this degree of human understanding, and to whom it means more to be honest than to impress. She really does know what being young is all about. Moreover, she does not spare the reader: she insists that we face, with Kate and Mark, the unrelenting miseries of mind and heart that are part and parcel of growing up. This can only be comforting to the young reader, and to the once-young it is more than a little salutary.

Ann Evans

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SUSAN PRICE
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(241 89555 3)

E. L. KONIGSBURG :
Father's Arcane Daughter
Macmillan. £2.95. (333 21427 7)

Much current children's literature concerns itself with the real-life problems of contemporary children, a development excellent but not without pitfalls. The characters can become ciphers—male, female, black, white, rich, poor, according to the requirements of the polemic; the story-line can be calculated like an algebraic equation, to demonstrate some social or personal theme and consequently lack conviction and narrative impetus. Happily, although both of these books, by American authors, deal with genuine personal problems, neither suffers from the defects I have outlined. Evan Hunter and E. L. Konigsburg are perceptive story-tellers and both books are compulsively readable.

At the beginning of *Me and Mr Stenner*, eleven-year-old Abby O'Neill's mother is in the process of obtaining a divorce. Until it comes through she and Abby are living with Peter Stenner (also involved in protracted divorce proceedings), whom she plans to marry when both are free. The divorces and the wedding eventually happen and the new Mr and Mrs Stenner take Abby away on holiday to Italy. The novel, intended for older children and adolescents, is narrated by Abby and it explores her feelings and behaviour during this perplexing transitional period. She is a sensitive, solitary child and she suffers great difficulty in absorbing the fact that the old status quo can never return. She is drawn to the attractive, humorous, caring Mr Stenner in spite of a sometimes uncontrollable antagonism to him as an interloper. Through a series of brilliant vignettes Evan Hunter traces the growth of their relationship, which is thorny and difficult for both.

Attempts by the man and the child to relate to each other often come to grief. In the final chapter Abby, after a deeply wounding, if unintended, rejection of her step-father, finds, in a memorable and emotionally powerful scene, those things to say which lead to a dénouement in which the reader knows that their relationship must now grow in richness, understanding and love.

The story is superbly told. The two main characters are remarkably real and there is no funking of the uglier manifestations of adult behaviour. I would single out the episode where Abby spends a terrifying evening alone with her father who is extremely drunk and tearfully maudlin, a state she does not understand. The sensitivity and human understanding in *Me and Mr Stenner* should make it required reading, not only for older children and adults in similar situations, but for all whose work involves them in family counselling as well.

The problem in *Father's Arcane Daughter* is more uncommon but no less real. The precociously brilliant "snot-nose" teenager, Winston, heir to the Carmichael millions, has a severely handicapped younger sister, Heidi, whom he superficially abhors. Nevertheless, he feels bound to her by shackles of pity and guilt at being himself whole. Their society-conscious mother conceals Heidi's malformation beneath pretty clothes and any aberrant behaviour of the child's is helplessly sanctioned. Into this scene, claiming an inheritance, comes Caroline, who may or may not be father's daughter by a previous marriage. Her presence, her honesty in the face of facts unacceptable to others, and her qualities of courage, care and love bring, eventually, tremendous, enriching changes in the lives of both children. Unfortunately the mechanism of the story is a bit cumbrous. The inheritance plot seems almost irrelevant and the need for the happy ending to accord with the American success ethic is a great pity. Where the story succeeds is in the exploration of the three siblings' relationship, and here it succeeds very well indeed.

Gerard Benson

Causes for concern

ROY BROWN :
The Cage
Abelard-Schuman. £3.50.
(200 72459 2)

PETER DICKINSON :
Annerton Pit
Gollancz. £3.25. (575 02239 6)

BILL LEIGH :
Sink-Hole
Gollancz. £3.40. (575 02275 2)

As there seems to be a trend towards imposing "significance" on children's novels, it may be worth resisting an empirical truism: that ideas most satisfactorily grow from novels, or novels from ideas. "Discussable points" are grafted on at the author's peril.

Thus when the blurb for Roy Brown's *The Cage* promises "thought provoking concern" the question is not "should the fictive world be so deliberately aimed at social argument" but "does the book pretend to anything else? Is this the case?" Certainly, eight boys without memories or backgrounds, in an anonymous cell-block, are not very promising material for character building—but this is not Mr Brown's preoccupation. Attention is held by the puzzle, and the problems posed by its solution. Should the state interfere fundamentally with freedom of choice? What do we do with the psychopath, the delinquent, the addict? Do we, as in this bizarre Home Office experiment, remove their backgrounds and, artificially, allow them a new destiny? There may be more than a grain of truth in the situation, and a wry moral in its failure; and the fact that we are only partially involved, and that we give intellectual rather than emotional assent hardly matters. Roy Brown has an important point, and he makes it efficiently and more or less unpretentiously. No great work of art, *The Cage* finds its strength in its unity of purpose.

Not so, however, the time-bound "points" of *Annerton Pit*. This is Peter Dickinson rather below par, with a trendy plot showing the terrible brittleness of the ultra-contemporary. The theme may be eternal—do ends justify means?—but the militant conservationists who blow up motorways and plan to take over an oil rig are a dismally catchpenny collection. Just as Roy Brown's amnesiac drug is called "Compound Y", so these conspirators are a weak pastiche of newspaper realities. But this matters far less in *The Cage* than in *Annerton Pit* because Peter Dickinson has at hand a far richer and more subtle substructure. The book is masterly in its presentation of the thirteen-year-old Jake, whose consciousness carries the narrative. Jake is blind, and the modulation of experience through heightened senses other than sight, the acceptance of blindness as normality, and the deep rapport with and respect for Jake which are built up, are very impressive indeed. Interpersonal relationships really mean something—especially between Jake and his impetuous but very caring elder brother. Equally, the ghostly terrors of the abandoned coal-mine, Annerton pit itself, and Jake's final encounter with the terrors in his own mind, all evolve, are all integral with the pervasive sightlessness. It is only the slackness of the central incidents, and the unnecessary striving for "excitement" and "significance" which undercut the real potential of the book.

Similarly, Bill Leigh's *Sink-Hole*, a far more satisfactory adventure *qua* adventure, only wavers when the author tries to make things happen rather than letting them. This claustrophobic epic of four children trapped in the Lancashire potholes and caverns is at its best when it is cut-and-thrust. Alan Garner's Earthdiving sequence, and leaving developing relationships to their own devices. Thus when Pete throws his watch away on impulse, or when Petra confronts nakedness, or when Patrick finally staggers to the surface in a confusion of words, the real distinction of the book shows through. But when the characters are forced into "significant" conversation, or the style intrudes for the sake of "style", the effect is momentarily lost. Mr Leigh does not seem to be a natural stylist, and so his occasional coinages—gustwind, dubsidarch, bittermilky—occasional changes of tense, and patches of retrospective narration, jar when they do not naturally spring from their context.

Peter Hunt

Pressures of the past

VIRGINIA HAMILTON :
Arilla Sun Down
Hamish Hamilton. £3.60.
(241 89548 0)

"Never before has black creative intelligence coincided so opportunely with the development of black pride, the advancement of political-cultural awareness, independence, and style to affect black art" wrote Virginia Hamilton in a 1975 article "High John Is Risen Again" (*The Horn Book Magazine* April 1975). Nowhere is this "black creative intelligence" so evident as in Virginia Hamilton's own writing, first in *M.C. Higgins The Great*, and now in her latest book published in Britain, *Arilla Sun Down*.

Virginia Hamilton, herself a descendant of slaves, is concerned with black identity. In *M. C. Higgins The Great* this concern is subtly explored in the history of the Higgins family. In *Arilla Sun Down* the concern is continued and deepened in the author's sophisticated treatment of intra-family relationships, the conflicts of adolescent choice, and sibling rivalry. Here the "interracial" Adams family is split between those who identify exclusively with one cultural component of their heritage against those who accept a shared collective interracial past.

The narrator is twelve-year-old Arilla Adams. Her mother is black, her father part-black, part-Indian. Her sixteen-year-old brother, Jack Sun Run plays at being more Indian, more of "The People" than the native Americans themselves. For Jack, "if the day didn't naturally evolve round him, then it couldn't happen". But in spite of her self-possessed, glamorous brother, Arilla manages to grow. She even gains, in the tradition of her native American heritage, her second name—Sun Down—only to discover that she has grown into something more than that name can encompass: she has become independent, her inter-racial identity confirmed.

An equally strong theme of *Arilla Sun Down* is the ethnic identity of the family as a whole. This identity breaks through the narrative in Arilla's disjointed infant memories and in snatches of half-remembered conversations which all merge as the book progresses into an acceptance of the family's shared interracial character. The conflicts and compromises of this splendid family portrait fit alongside each individual member's pride in and growing awareness of their need for each other and of their common heritage.

Virginia Hamilton is an important chronicler of the black experience. She writes in an intense, understated narrative, interspersed with evocative flashbacks, the whole richly reflecting the different levels of this complex and powerful story. And, coming from a directory that is new and unfamiliar to most of us, *Arilla Sun Down* is a little culture shock all on its own: here there are no "ghetto" signposts, no bland apologia for the liberal conscience. In describing so perceptively this particular interracial family struggling with the shocks thrown up by their heritage and the pressures of the moment, Virginia Hamilton has achieved a universal statement about people and their roots.

Rosemary Stones

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Save-a-damsel

GEOFFREY TREASE :
The Spy Catchers
Illustrated by Geoffrey Bargery
Hamish Hamilton. £1.25.
(241 89420 4)

JEAN WILLS :
Who Wants a Job ?
Illustrated by Douglas Hall
Hamish Hamilton. £1.25.
(241 89417 4)

PAMELA OLDFIELD :
The Terribly Plain Princess and other stories.
Illustrated by Glenys Ambrus
Hodder and Stoughton. £2.40.
(340 20713 2)

JOAN WYATT :
Carrot Tops
Illustrated by Sally Long
Heinemann. £2.50. (434 97500 1)

The appearance of Antelopes, Hamish Hamilton's admirable series of short novels for young readers, is deceptive. Compact little volumes, they have the cautious, conservative look of educational books, though the stories inside are brimful of original adventure. Geoffrey Trease's *The Spy Catchers*, for example, cleverly works strands from history and literature into an exciting and atmospheric tale set in eighteenth-century Somerset. With rumours of a French invasion in the air, the villagers of Nether Stowey are only too willing to believe that the three mysterious strangers among them are spies.

After all, they walk the seashore at odd hours, take notes on their wanderings, and talk with an unfamiliar accent. When two children on holiday decide to investigate the strange trio, they stumble on two poets—Wordsworth and Coleridge—reading their latest works to Wordsworth's sister Dorothy. Based on a true incident, the book is bound to prompt follow-up reading. Long shadows flicker on the hills at sunset, the bare masts of sailing ships stand out against the evening sky—Geoffrey Trease has just the romantic imagination his story needs.

There is less to commend in the other Antelope, *Who Wants a Job ?* though it, too, offers a broad range of language and a story strong enough to extend the young reader's concentration. The "spy catchers" learnt the dialect words for country things; the children in this book discover the meaning, and usefulness, of "middleum". Lizzie's grandfather and Jane's mother both need to find assistants for their adjoining shops in the village high street if they are not to close down. The girls set out to solve their families' problems in the nearby town, and are given some unexpected help by a gang of boys who run a kind of staff agency from the churchyard. The story is quite lively and is one with which today's children will easily be able to identify, but it could have been improved by the introduction of an edge of uncertainty or conflict.

One of the delights of *The Terribly Plain Princess and other stories* is that the endings are not always happy (though never gloomy) and, while all the rightful ingredients of good fairy-tales are here, the mixture is deliciously different. Princesses are sometimes plain, the occasional mermaid hates the water, and ogres have been known to be vegetarian. Pamela Oldfield's stories are full of wit and spice, with illustrations to match. In "The Unwanted Giant" a giant called Bop is unaware of the effect his loud snores, clumsy habits and risqué songs are having on the townspeople. He cannot read, so is quite unmoved when they picket his cave carrying banners which read "GIANT GO HOME!". It is when they turn him into a respectable citizen, throwing away his threadbare animal skin and cleaning out his cave, that he decides it is time to move on. In "Viola and the Ogre" the brave ogre falls in with the hand of the girl he loves, but makes friends with an ogre instead. Pamela Oldfield obviously has a deep affection for the genre—and a wicked sense of fun.

Anarchic four-year-olds and harassed mothers will have trouble recognizing themselves in *Carrot Tops*, a sugary, self-conscious book about the kind of things mothers and pre-school children do and talk about together—a trip to Kew Gardens or the supermarket, making paper men, a walk by the sea. In the relentless reparee between saintly parent and precociously articulate child, it is the child who gets the best lines. "Where does the wind go ?" asks small gum-booted Andrew ; "Does it pile up in a great whoosh or leak out round corners ?" The book is a lost opportunity.

Juliet Page

Holiday happenings

JOAN G. ROBINSON :
The Summer Surprise
Illustrated by Glenys Ambrus
Collins. £1.95. (00 184350 8)

GRISELDA GIFFORD :
Ben's Expedition
Illustrated by Robert Micklewright
and
PAMELA SYKES :
Billy's Monster
Illustrated by Caroline Sharp
Bodley Head. £2.25. (370 10899 X)

In *The Summer Surprise* Sarah, on holiday with her parents and baby brother in the depths of the country, finds unexpected friends : an old tramp who spends his days lying in a cornfield, and the children on the nearby caravan site. There are small mysteries and anxieties, however. How does the old man get into the locked shed in the garden ? Then there is Helen—Sarah gets on very well with her, but why is she so odd about her parents, and where exactly is her caravan ?

The solutions to the two problems have a pleasing complementary symmetry, yet come as real surprises, particularly the truth about Helen's parents (which seemed just a little farfetched until I remembered renting a holiday bungalow from somebody who turned out to be inhabiting its converted garage).

The characters are convincing and likeable ; Sarah's mother with her shyness about her scarred face, Helen with her satchel ("Saves me having to go back for things. Keeps me all in one piece"), the old man with his neat way of dealing with Sarah's scruples about talking to him, Sarah's father with his embarrassing holiday hat (his choice is finally vindicated—or is it ?). The story is constantly enlivened with touches like this, and although it moves at a relaxed pace it holds the attention right up to the last line.

The New Acorn Library has deliberately put *Billy's Monster* and *Ben's Expedition* together because they are similar ; "Two stories about going exploring", says the back of the book, and there are other resemblances: Ben and Billy both feel the need to assert themselves against older siblings, and each is helped by a retired Colonel with an indulgent attitude towards expeditions. I felt each story suffered a little as a result of these echoes, but this could well be a purely adult reaction.

In *Ben's Expedition* Ben travels more than once down the river, first on a home-made raft, and then in the Colonel's punt with the Colonel and one of his dogs ("They've decided he's the one", Ben said. "I expect they did a sort of dog's eeny-meeny-miny-mo.") The Colonel is a brusque, kindly, enterprising companion, and Ben's adventures and disasters make good reading.

Billy's Monster tells how Billy and his dog unearth what is definitely the best skull of all for the school's natural history museum. (Its only rival in terms of size is brought by the butcher's son and belongs to a sheep.) Can it really have come from a monster ?—no, but the explanation is as satisfying as the rest of the story, which must have pleased countless children already, and deserves to be read by many more.

Rodie Sudbery

Group treatment

Series designed for specific age-groups often include books that would probably not pass muster on their own, and many of the following books would not. In *The Trackers*, a brother and sister invent a tracking game which they use to capture an escaped and wounded leopard. Journalistic stuff, of which the key-word is "thrilled", it is relatively harmless. Of course, no child should go within a mile of a hurt leopard and cleverclogs like these in the story deserve to be eaten. But what child would actually emulate such nonsense ?

The Rescue, set in Provence, is based on a true incident and concerns the efforts of Jacques to save Mechoui the lamb from the rutis-seric. The story is narrated with humour but spoilt by poor writing. The American author could be forgiven the sometimes curious English ("barefoot feet") but not for burdening the text with unnecessary amounts of French.

Also set in France, *November and the Truffle Pig* is much better value. Unless the scatterbrained Pogie learns to hunt truffles by November, she must go to the butcher, and Jean-Paul determines that she shall learn even if it takes a miracle. The *story is true to life and funny*, and Joan Smith evokes the Périgord countryside and catches the cadence of the French language without stuffing the text full of descriptions, explanations and italicized words. In none of the other books have the illustrations been more than humdrum, but here are two beauties—lazy, bibulous Grandpère, and Grandmère busy over cooking pots that one can fairly smell.

With *The Winter-Sleeper* we move from the theme of child saves animal into the world of fantasy. By hiding a bear's fur coat, the Lapplanders Matti and Jakk exact a promise from him to help them in time of trouble. This he fulfils when a Stallo-giant tries to steal their gold, but only at the cost of his bushy tail. The story is written in a strong folk-tale style with pithy dialogue, but the plot itself is unsatisfactory : it comes as a shock when the bear removes his coat and starts to speak. The folkloristic story of Matti and the Stallo-giant, and the etiological myth of why the bear is stumpy-tailed, are oil and water, and it would take a skilful author to blend the two modes, the particular with the generic, and time past with mythic time.

Totally at one with itself is *The Fearsome Tide*, the third in a sequence which is getting better all the time. The adjective in the title gives the clue to the tone of the whole, a delicate parody of the Celtic Twilight, MacGonegall and Robbie Burns, and *Folktales of the Western Highlands*. The story is written in a language vivid and densely textured, but still economical, and is full of romantic evocations of place, whether lochan or seashore or peat-bog. The chief characters — squat Hummadum, young Sandy, and bony and mystical Joy-across Little People, by the Minpins out of Monachar and Manachar.

So, too, are their enemies, the Old Laoute and the Old Fylie, a psychopathic Darby and Joan, who couple an appearance of good humour and childish innocence (almost all their nouns are diminutives) with a terrifying lust to kill. Sinister illustrations by Carol Tarlant almost perfectly complement an exceptional text.

Jennifer Chandler

GLYN FREWER: *The Trackers*. Illustrated by Richard Kennedy. Abelard-Schumann. £1.95. (200 72414 2). Paperback 45p. (200 72415 0)

TONY TALBOT: *The Rescue*. Illustrated by Jerom Roy. Abelard-Schumann. £1.95. (200 72437 1). Paperback 45p. (200 72438 X)

JOAN SMITH: *November and the Truffle Pig*. Illustrated by Janet Duchesne. Hamish Hamilton. £1.25. (241 89567 7)

ALAN C. JENKINS: *The Winter-Sleeper*. Illustrated by Graham Humphreys. Hamish Hamilton. £1.25. (241 89568 5)

MARGARET MILLER: *The Fearsome Tide*. Illustrated by Carol Tarlant. Abelard-Schumann. £1.95. (200 72385 5) Paperback 45p. (200 72386 3)

Men of iron

ALAN GARNER :
Tom Fobble's Day
Illustrated by Michael Foreman
Collins. £2.50. (00 184832 1)

Alan Garner's *Tom Fobble's Day*, like his recent *The Stone Book*, is, ostensibly, for younger children. A boy has his sledge taken and broken by another boy. His blacksmith grandfather, grandson of the stonemason in the earlier book, makes him another. Boy sledges ; grandfather—it is hinted—dies. That is all. Yet, short though it may be, this small precise poem of a book is not simple.

In the past I have found Alan Garner too conscious of his own brilliance. Here his cleverness is nearer understanding. The book is about doing and becoming (and not always avoiding danger in the process) ; about belonging—to people, to landscape, to *their shared past* ; above all about that total loving attention to substance that is not only the beginning of poetry, medi-tation even, but also the beginning of true making, whether of a building, or as here, of a sledge.

The import of *Tom Fobble's Day*, as of *The Stone Book*, is that to see substance properly is to understand beyond it, though its focus being metal and not stone the message is finally a more uncompromising, wintry one. We see metal used creatively, smelted to make sledge-runners. We also see it destructive, even, perhaps, of the man who loves it, for this is a world of air-raids, of guns raining shrapnel, of the grandfather's fears for his absent grandson and of his own tales of slaughter in previous wars. Yet the landscape and its past survives. The man dies perhaps, the boy alone on the hill begins to see. And this book exists —one music comment finally on the quality of its substance: the beautiful paper and elegant printing, and Michael Foreman's etchings, as distinctive as his etchings for *The Stone Book*, yet as different from these as metal is different from stone.

Penelope Farmer

Bears and bards

JAMES ROOSE-EVANS :
The Lost Treasure of Wales
Illustrated by Brian Robb
Deutsch. £2.50. (233 96784 2)

Devoted followers of Odd and Elsewhere have reason to be sad. Children like their favourite characters to go on for ever, but James Roose-Evans announced some time ago that there would be only seven books about the clown and the little bear and, with *The Lost Treasure of Wales*, he has carried out his threat of rounding off the series.

It is a series unlike any other in its strange mixture of fact and fiction. The stories are dramatic and fanciful, but they are centred on Fenton House in Hampstead, which is a real place. The Welsh farmer, whom Odd and Elsewhere frequently visit, helps them in their adventures with Magic, Merlin and Malevil, but is also credibly preoccupied with such everyday things as lambing. The two main characters, Odd and Elsewhere, could exist only in an imaginary world, but they are consistently linked to our own. Odd, in finding the Great Bear, discovers that he is Ursus Minor ; Elsewhere, when meeting other clowns, gives the paseword, "Joseph Grimaldi". Such details reflect an adult's eclectic knowledge and add immeasurably to the richness of the books. Too many children's books are restricted to a child's-eye view. *Here, at every turn, invention is* nourished by reality and, suitably, Odd and Elsewhere remain poised in ambiguity, half real bear and real clown, half teddy bear and toy clown.

The most memorable passages in the books are those set pieces in which fantastic situations take on realistic clothing. In *The Secret of the Seven Bright Shiners*, for example, the crocks are defeated by a cloud of moths. The event is fanciful, but the moths are real, lovingly listed by name. Similarly, in *Elsewhere and the Gathering of the Clowns*, Odd and Elsewhere set off in a horse-drawn caravan to visit the King of the Clowns. Having studied the map, they decide to go up the M6 and see what happens to them there is very funny, but completely credible.

I would not wish to suggest that the plots are merely an excuse for such passages. On the contrary, each book is a fast-moving adventure, told economically and without digressions. But the adventures take their particular flavour from the author's taste for allusion and association.

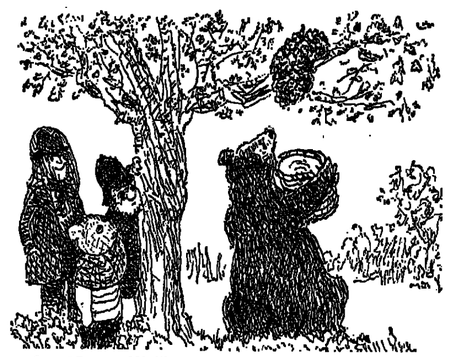
There are, of course, faults and this last book contains examples of most of them. The conversation is sometimes-stilted and the violence associated with Malevil, the chief villain, while not horrific, is out of proportion. I also found it hard to believe in the huge cauldron, suspended over a smoky fire, which is used by Merlin as a combined prison and torture chamber for the enemies of King Arthur". That seems most unchivalrous. Moreover, *The Lost Treasure of Wales* has the characteristic vice of a last book: all the major figures in the series reappear and much of the early part of the story is taken up with reintroducing them.

Nevertheless, the invention is as rich and unexpected as ever, from the beginning, when Odd tries, like a gipsy bear, to massage Hallelujah Jones's spine by walking up and down on it, to the end, when the Lost Treasure turns out to be a tribe of small bears just like Odd. I particularly liked Malevil's attempted escape through the tunnels, a journey which the Welsh clowns turn into something resembling a Ghost Train ride.

The moment when the lost bears march out of the mountain, announcing that they are the treasure, is *no mere story-teller's trick. It is a* subtle reminder of the sense of values which underlies all the books. Similar moments occur when Odd, the small rejected bear, discovers that he is Ursus Minor, with his place among the stars, and when Elsewhere is named the next King of the Clowns because he has been acquainted with failure. These events are unpretentiously related, but they are not trivial. Big things are often easier to deal with on a small scale.

It is a pity, in some ways, that there will be no more books in the series. They are not great books, but they are well written and unusual, providing a richness rare in the literary diet of small children. On the other hand, the seven books form a balanced group which here comes to its natural end. One must applaud the author's sense of proportion—a virtue rare in those who write a series.

Gillian Cross



One of Brian Robb's illustrations for The Lost Treasure of Wales.

Buzz, buzz, buzz

The Pooh Song Book
Words by A. A. Milne
Music by H. Fraser-Simson
Illustrated by E. H. Shepard
Methuen. £2.60. (416 85060 X)

In the 1920s A. A. Milne, collaborating with Harold Fraser-Simson, produced sixty-seven songs of which fifteen are contained in this collection. To some fortunate grown-ups these songs still evoke the pleasure of "Children's Hour", an idyll of nannies, buttercup meadows and rice pudding for dinner again. Both the humour of the stories and the identity of the illustrations by E. H. Shepard have become part of the cult of Pooh and its commercial success. The songs, however, have been largely forgotten.

They are both nostalgic and difficult. With a few exceptions they are written to be sung by adults. The accompaniment is pianistic and sophisticated. Of the songs still much sung only "Vespers" is in this collection. It is one of the easier and therefore more accessible pieces. "Buckingham Palace" a perennial favourite with the very young is not included. The simple but emphatic "Happiness" ("John had great big waterproof boots on") is also missing. All of the songs included in this collection have appeal: an adult might sing them to a very small child. But they are certainly not for use in schools. Even the guitar chords which have been added are beyond the stretch of junior school children.

This book is clearly aimed at the continuing upsurge of interest in children's music. The presentation is beautiful and some Pooh devotees will be charmed. But the scene has changed and primary school children now prefer to relate directly to music, to sing it and play it themselves.

Sarah Gregory

Territorial battles

JENNIFER HENDERSON :
The Snowman
Macmillan. £2.95. (333 21503 6)

HARRIET GRAHAM :
The Street That Disappeared
Deutsch. £2.50. (233 96781 8)

Derelict buildings make natural adventure playgrounds, and in each of these stories a group of condemned houses is taken over by children and used as a gathering place. In the first the habit is illicit, in the second it is approved by parents outraged at the Council's failure to provide a proper play area.

The Snowman is set in a seedy quarter of Paddington and its central characters are Debbie, Marilyn and Kevin Williamson, the middle children of one of those large, unruly but basically affectionate families that are always cropping up in children's fiction. The prototype is the Ruggles family of Ono End Street—but the Williamsons are unequivocally contemporary in several important respects and Jennifer Henderson certainly does not shirk the burning issues of modern life. Children leave home as soon as they are old enough to go on national assistance. An illegitimate baby appears walking in the first chapter and goes on wailing and burping at intervals to indicate the burdens of unsupported motherhood. The family flat is in a multi-racial community and is prone to visits from the police — "the fuzz". Pushing, voluble Aunt Lil has an unfortunate but topical experience: she gets stoned accidentally on LSD, with unpleasant effects for the heroine. Perky, outspoken Debbie sometimes appears surprisingly naive for a fast-talking adolescent: "Terry I Terry, can I be your bird ?" she asks her brother. (*Her brother's* incest is not one of the subsidiary themes).

In spite of the fact that she has used it in her title Jennifer Henderson is not very clear about the function of the snowman. It is a symbolic object but the force it represents has another embodiment, of all things a large-nosed angel. "I am . . . amongst other things a fully qualified guardian. It's all part of my job", the angel remarks somewhat ponderously. He has come to bring Christmas to the children — or at least the quality of cosy domestic happiness that Christmas really stands for.

This is an extraordinarily confused story, a tale of kidnapping, drug-pushing and family difficulties superimposed on a base of whimsical fantasy with *sentimental* undertones. But the author has a good ear for colloquialisms and a natural exuberance of style which enables her to present with assurance the repartee of the streets, the catch-phrase smartness and impatience of bright, gregarious children.

The Street That Disappeared is less elaborate and ultimately less memorable. Its theme is simple : the proposed demolition of Tumbrils Mews, an unofficial play street, and the efforts of Evvie Clark and her friends to save it from the developers. Evvie is a plodder, a good-hearted child of average intelligence, one of the little put-upon sisters whose literary ancestry can be traced back to Ameliaranne Wiggins. In fact Evvie is the only person in Harriet Graham's story who is susceptible to the charm of Mobile Mews. Her supporters, children and adults alike, are interested only in asserting their right to a social amenity which has been overlooked. The book is about compromise and adjustment of values and it strikes a note of rather facile optimism. The outcome of the children's protest is plain from the title ; but in the end even the heroine is persuaded that the council has everyone's deepest interests at heart.

Patricia Craig

Classroom lore

GENE KEMP :
The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler
Illustrated by Carolyn Dinan
Faber. £2.75. (571 10966 7)

JAY WILLIAMS :
Daylight Robbery
Kestrel. £2.25. (7226 5247 X)

"What's blue and cries for help ?"
"A damson in distress."

A similar gem heads each chapter of Gene Kemp's *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler* giving rise to the hope that here might be a children's author capable of writing for, rather than at, her readers. The hope is very nearly justified. Gene Kemp is a primary school teacher, whose previous books were the popular "Tamworth Pig" stories. She has an experienced ear for the lore and language of the *upper juniors; their toughness*, sentimentality, and deep appreciation of really terrible jokes. This understanding is reflected in her likeable story set in a small town primary school making this a good book to read aloud to a class of ten to twelve-year-olds. Writing "at" creeps in, though, with some reflections on selective schooling which seem to be aimed more at the adult reader than at Gene Kemp's proper audience.

Writing "at" spoils Jay Williams's *Daylight Robbery* entirely. Its banal metaphor of "building bridges" between people and its turgid insistence on the theme of "folks are not what they seem" could well have been dispensed with in favour of a sharpening up of plot and characterization. Written, apparently, in response to popular demand for a detective story, this book breaks the first rule of the genre: don't hold back essential clues from the reader—even, or especially, the child reader.

Rosamund Faith

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Choice products

By Fred Inglis

It is all very well to say, with so many well intentioned progressivists among teachers, librarians and parents that children's novels are for children, but there is a touch of bad faith about saying so. For children's books are written by adults, chosen by adults—that is, published in certain numbers, paid for by pocket money and book tokens earned by adults, put on library shelves by adults, chosen by Puffins, by the booksellor, by the *TLS*, by the prize-givers. For children, there is no getting away from grown-ups, and it's not simply natural, it's necessary that this should be so.

These facts of life are becoming more and more contradictory as the future becomes less and less continuous with present and past. Without wanting to cry doom for every year until the end of the millenium, it surely makes sense to speak of great changes stirring and swirling under our feet. The reconstruction of Europe after 1945 quite rightly held and defined our imaginations for a generation. But new and hungry generations are marching across the plains. Nobody can draw a cartoon of this rough beast slouching across the 1980s in just a sentence, although Ted Hughes's marvellous monster in *The Iron Man* probably comes nearest to it, able as it is to devour the world, to bump it out of its galactic rotations, or so to fill it with the sweet, ineffable music of the spheres that wars are stopped and turmoil stilled.

What books, then, should children now read? Or more particularly, what books do I want my child—this actual eleven-year-old daughter—to have read by the time she moves on to *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* and *Great Expectations*. And with the best, most radical will in the world, who would not want her to read those books? It is the merest madness to say, as some ranters do, that the greatest English novels are merely the refuge of the petit bourgeoisie before the onward march of history. These novels are great novels because they can mean so much. The case is closed in none of them: such contain the criticisms of the values it most cherishes. And there seems to me a great sanity in the likelihood that when this daughter comes to Dickens and the Brontës, she will read them alongside big bestsellers—alongside *Rebecca* and *Jamaica Inn*, *Poldark*, *Whiteoaks*, alongside Joan Plaidy, Elizabeth Goudge, in and out of Hobbiton and even Atlanta, Georgia. For all the chintziness and vulgarity of these books, they have their great sentimentality, their own living principle to carry them along. Whatever the future holds, there is a propriety that these books are among the writings of the passage to adulthood. In the immortal words of Benjamin Spock, "Your child is tougher than you think", and pussy-footing round the library for books which will bring no blush to a modern maiden's cheek is an expense of spirit in a waste of shame. Imaginations, especially when they are growing, need some strain and risk to become strong.

This is not to argue against all prohibitions. The moral questions, however, are inextricably psychological as well, and a point worth making is that psychology and ethics entail one another. We are caught in the contradiction between the necessary dominance of adults over children and a cosmology which, in its strong preference for what Mary Douglas calls zero-structure, affirms the batilecries of individualism as the master-symbols of morality. In the top-rating scented-soap operas on television, *Fathers and Children*, *Another Bouquet* and so forth, the *only* moral bond which is allowed to check the hectic, irresistible call of radical personalization is the bond of parent to child. The appeal to sincerity and authenticity and to self-fulfilment presupposes the porousness of institutions; integrity is substituted for dignity, trust to self for loyalty, courageous independence for duty. You "may" tempt a child to celebrate the changes, but the fact is that once they can has been replaced by negotiation, and membership by competitive autonomy, then you are no longer at home in any place and have nowhere to lay your head.

These are the tendencies which have made it possible for Richard Gregory to propose the fiction-making creativeness of every individual as the model for a new experimental psychology. Such a proposal could hardly have made sense to a society of more fixed and stable institutions. But the divisions of labour and of value in industrial societies forced father out to work and mother to become the curator of the new Romantic reality which is the experience of our inner subjectivity. The great nineteenth-century novelists were either women or strongly feminine in part of their disposition (and the more complete as a result).

The best novelists for children are, I suggest, biased in the same way. They turn to writing novels (or the mass analogy of a novel, the television film) because our history makes the novel the natural instrument of moral exploration. (The latter word echoes a great modern ideal: the hero is an explorer, not a pilgrim.) For novels, to adapt a fine phrase of John Berger's, walk like children. They do not touch the ground at every point. They walk, run, bound, stop to inspect something closely, hurry on again, according to the pace of reader and narrator.

And if this is so, what kind of books can be an adequate guide to the puzzles, the joys and terrors of modern rulelessness, the lone and level sands of the free spirit, what sorts of books can this child take to her desert island?

The moral and cultural point of Professor Gregory's idea is that fictions stand to life as metaphor to reality. They are an image of alternatives and possibility. So if we speak of the best children's books, in a famous formulation, as bringing to an intense focus "an unusually developed interest in life" "a vital capacity for exporiance" "a marked moral intensity", then these phrases in no way suggest closure or rigidity or, worst of all, portentousness. The reason why *The Mouse and His Child*, *The Iron Man*, *Alice*, *Swallows and Amazons*, *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *Carrie's War*, *Midnight is a Place*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *Tom's Midnight Garden*, are all as marvellous as they are, is that their energy of characterization, their vitality and comedy, are of a piece with their moral seriousness.

And those generalities take their force, as these days they must, from the effort to make experience mean something at a time when zero-structure and radical personalization (Bernstein's phrase) leave the individual with everything to do for himself. "Meaning" is then particular: the mouse and his child make a funny little commune out of the waste-land of the garbage tip which still lies on the road to West Egg. The mole leaves his stuffy, comfortable respectability to find a more venturesome self and a friendship which passes understanding. Alice faces out the intolerable adults by virtue of her selfless (but self-confident) zest for their vast and comic awfulness. Tom discovers the honour of age, and its loveliness. And Carrie, carefully and timidly, finds the comfort in the strength of love.

These are the lessons which children can learn by discovery. No one would be so crass as to mark out the necessary values which a modern child should, in the jargon of the curriculum developers, conceptualize and assimilate—moral autonomy, perhaps from *Dawn Wind*; mutual interdependence from *Watership Down*; physical courage from *The Hobbit*; domestic patience from *The Long Winter*. The solemnity of some critic-advocates would lead you to suppose that a children's novel is simply a moral exercise.

It has, however, been the great strength of English literature—of which children's fiction is a part—since Blake, Wordsworth, the Brontës and Dickens, that its sense of responsibility goes far beyond the individual and his personal relationships. The test to have in mind is that children's novels be characterized by their responsibility to the demands of immediate life. It is a human not a political point to say that a children's novel written as it is for both present and future, should now seek out lives and forms of lives which may return a credible meaning to such great names as "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends".

The power of paint

These five books at first aroused a double reaction—an initial dislike of their visual quality, so that I felt sure that I would never have bought any of them, followed by a slightly guilty recognition of my amusement at several of the asides in the text clearly aimed at the adult reader. Having been brought up against the problem of who buys and who chooses books I felt doubtful enough to try them out on two nine-year-olds, who thought they were marvellously funny and who loved the pictures.

The most successful was *Le Petit Homme Ddprimd*, an almost wordless story in violent colours showing a cyclamen-pink and emerald-green dragon hungrily following a depressed little man in a black bowler hat who is convinced that nothing ever goes right for him. He goes for a walk oblivious of the dragon murderously stalking him, and the dragon is foiled and stricken by countless frustrating obstacles until it is finally blown to bits by a ricochet from the bazooka it was firing. At the end of his walk the man drinks a green potion he has distilled, and with plans for a more powerful and successful future becomes—guess what? a cyclamen-pink and emerald-green dragon with a black bowler hat. Adults may like to find a moral about the self-destructive quality of violence and the poignancy of the victim becoming the oppressor, but children just find it hilarious and it is a story they will certainly go back to.

The most original book—*Mais enfin, pourquoi voit-on de si drôles de choses dans le ciel du royaume de Juliejuste Ier ?*—contains some amusing comments on attitudes to unfamiliar arts. Juliejuste Ier is an unimpressive lion who asks the famous avant-garde painter—a blue-eyed giraffe who decorates the animals themselves by painting hippopotami red with green spots, deer in graduated shades of turquoise and panthers with chess-board squares—to paint him. This she does, turning him out looking more foolish than ever and with red and white-striped socks, pale blue and salmon-pink shorts with trendy patches and, sticking out her tongue in concentration as she does so, American braces with red, white and blue stars and stripes. His pleasure turns to rage as his subjects try to snap his braces, and he calls for the capture and destruction of the painter. She eludes him by painting herself to blend with the landscape: the fantasy takes off here as she is by now enormous, spread out against the skyline with a blue head against the sky, orange shoulders against the sunset and the rest green against the hills. She is never found, and torments the king by painting strange things in the sky—a mocking sun sticking out its tongue, or smiling clouds with bow-ties among interlocking rainbows.

PASCAL MASSONAT: *Le Petit Homme Ddprimd*. Paris: Garnier (2 7050 0019 4).

MAX CABANIS: *Mais enfin, pourquoi voit-on de si drôles de choses dans le ciel du royaume de Juliejuste Ier ?* Paris: Garnier (2 7050 0060 7).

SERGE PEYNET and PHILIPPE BONNARD: *Iplanentap*. Paris: Garnier (2 7050 0061 5).

Gédéon: d'apres Benjamin Rabier. Adapted by Hélène Ratvé, Gilles Cottin and Michel Ocelot. Paris: Garnier (2 7050 0016 X).

La Malson de Gédéon: d'apres Benjamin Rabier et le feuilleton télévisé de Michel Ocelot. Adapted by Hélène Ratvé and Gilles Cottin. Paris: Garnier (2 7050 0044 5)

The book ends with a huge giraffe in space pouring a pot of red and yellow paint over the globe on which stands the furious king, with the caption: "Et que longtemps, longtemps encore, elle lui en fera voir de toutes le couleurs !"

Iplanentap is a wordless book set in the North African desert. A turbaned Arab and his hookah-smoking owl companion design and commission a magic carpet which carries them over a town with a bazaar, palm trees and a huge mosque with rows of prostrate praying figures in the courtyard, over oil wells, the desert, and after a puzzling interlude in an aeroplane the whole story turns out to be being read aloud by the same Arab with the owl at his side to a spell-bound group of assorted animals and children round a fire in the desert. The pictures are very bright and some make particular use of intricacies of pattern and design—the arcaded room with brightly dressed women weaving different carpets sitting on rugs on a patterned floor, or the town with its inlaid gateway and coloured cupolas seen from above—but the movement in and out of dream is uneasy and contrived.

The last two books, *Gédéon* and *La maison de Gédéon*, are based on a television series. The hero has obvious literary antecedents: he is a duckling born with an exceptionally long neck, who is laughed at by all around him. He goes away and makes his own life, forgivingly rescuing those who laughed at him, resourcefully solving problems with fierce dogs, greedy crocodiles and cruel gamekeepers. The visual style is based on comic strips, with speech in balloons, and the narrative style is that of many cartoons—fast-moving incidents following each other in a sequence which only finishes because we have reached the last page of the book. Asides for adults there may be, such as the escaped crocodile who gets into a river and thinks "At last a river that is not polluted", or a cat on a farm drinking milk and saying "At last here one can be sure it is unadulterated", but these are real kids' books: fast, funny, and deeply boring for grown-ups. They might well transfer to the English screen, but Gédéon does not have the charm of the shaggy dog Pollux who, with his strong English accent, became our own dear Dougal in the "Magic Roundabout".

Jennifer Cang



Scenes from Gédéon au bord de l'eau, *another title in the series adapted from French television.*

Poetic introductions

PAUL VINCENSINI :
Qu'est-ce qu'il n'y a ?
Illustrated by Anne-Marie Dunoyer
Paris : Saint Germain-des-Prés.
(2 243 00190 X)

LUC BERIMONT :
Comptines pour les enfants d'ici-et les canards sauvages
Paris: Saint Germain-des-Prés. 20fr.
(2 243 00104 7)

You can buy records of French children's songs; or you can leave your offspring among French children for a day, by the end of which he or she will have learned at least to hiss "C'est a moi !", in self-defence, and with a proprietorial spleen that may quite alarm you; but you cannot, however diligently Francophile a parent, achieve much by setting your children to French children's verses. There is a quite implacable association in the matter-of-fact French mind between literature and rectitude, and especially between poetry and clean socks; and the whole French tendency to treat children like adults *manqués* meets, all too often in books for children, a dismaying point of intersection with the French respect for an intellectualised "surrealist" fantasy which can be quite distastefully condescending when it is directed towards children.

Certainly, these two books of French children's verse do nothing to dislodge such convictions. They are prettily (and expensively) produced, the poems printed in blue ink, one to a page, with endlessly simple, "child-like" illustrations. The poems are short, as these two examples show. The first is "Mal maintenant" and the second is nameless. It is very important to try to imagine yourself reading them to a boy whose socks are not clean.

Après toute la poussière
Qu'ils ont soulevée
Mal maintenant
Je vais éternuer dans la lune
Reste contre la barrière ouverte
Sans regarder les mots
Qui paissent
Derrière ton dos

There may be slightly more response to a rather nasty one called "Vieux":

Vieux
Il vaut mieux
Arroser vos fleurs
Qu'commercer vos voisins

These three are all by Paul Vincensini, who is, the publishers say, "the leading poet of humour of our age", whose poems are "stunning in their lyricism, their huge unexpected images, which burst the skin of the real, startling the adult as well as the child's eye" and which "like a tonic, give a flavour to life". All this suggests an oddly anaemic recollection of childhood.

Luc Berimont is less dismaying; his cheerful verses have a cackle of energy behind them, and are good standard nonsense-verses; depending, however, almost entirely on rather taxing word-play, they are virtually untranslatable. So not very useful either for the Francophile parent or *garde-malade*. It really does all make one uncommonly grateful for Charles Causley.

Anne Duchêne

Imported culture

GIORGIO P. PANINI :
Le origini dell 'uomo
Milan: Mondadori. L5.000.

GUIDO RUGGIERI :
Storia della geologia
Milan: Mondadori. L4.500.

SABATINO MOSCATI :
Vita privata nell' antichità
Milan: Mondadori. L5.000.

Montessori notwithstanding, Italian education seems to limp after rather than joyfully herald modern ideas; with which (again, Bologna's yearly book fair notwithstanding) goes a shortage of the sort of children's books, at least produced in Italy, which are elsewhere taken for granted. Translations, adaptations, a whole child-level culture imported wholesale from America, Britain, France, has long been the rule; the background of children's books originally in Italian being sparsely filled, and everyone over forty having had his earliest literary baptism by total immersion in the culturally curious, and now embarrassing waters of fascism.

A PhD thesis surely lies waiting for the student of Italian influences from abroad in childhood; the way in which the adult Italian novelist so often draws nostalgically on Melville or Verne, Carroll or Alcott or imported comic strips, on a sense of cultural "otherness"—escapist or expansive, depending on your view of it. And in the past few years Italy has leapt so abruptly into the modern world—internationalist and permissive, with the clichés as well as the advantages of its sudden eye-opening, that intermediary works, in the children's field at least, seem scarcely to exist.

Mondadori's "Grandi Libri d'Oro" are informative books for the young in a format familiar to English readers when own books of the kind are, indeed, often printed in Italy; large magazine-like volumes with the graphic panache as well as the slight vulgarity of so much Italian printing today. This format and air may appeal to young readers, television's children with their eye in for such a style, but they occasionally suggest a rather Disney-like view of the past (the cover of *Vita privata nell'antichità*, for instance, suggests thoroughly modern children in fancy dress; to which it may be objected that Roman wall-paintings often do much the same thing). They are handsome books, though, and inexpensive by our standards, considering the high level of production and the number of coloured illustrations. The pictures are good and on the whole unhackneyed, though the text is rather close-packed on the page and gives the whole a slightly crowded look. They address their readers not as schoolchildren at their lessons but as members of society concerned with the present application of knowledge of the past, social beings interested in their surroundings and background and the way in which the distant behaviour of their ancestors or of the earth beneath them may influence their present and their future lives.

Of these three volumes, all dealing with the remote past, *Le origini dell'uomo* and *Storia della geologia* do better than *Vita privata nell' antichità*, life in the ancient world being rather too broad a subject, the ancient world itself too wide a field, to be fitted into a single short text, so that Ur and Nineveh, the Etruscans and the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Phoenicians and Babylonians, all seem rather jumbled (a table with dates and comparisons, like the one in the geological volume, would help). Still, at a very general level it has interesting things to say, not just about the comfort of many ancient dwellings but about such things as women in the ancient world, magic and religious ritual, burial customs, diet, games and recreations, and, most interesting because least familiar, perhaps, ancient humour (room caricatures on Greek vases to satirical drawings on papyrus, from Pompeiian graffiti to burlesque sketches of a Theban banquet.

The formation of the earth and the evolution of man are more easily treated chronologically and the illustrations in both volumes about them are outstanding—diagrams, drawings and photographs to excite the most torpid to wonder and curiosity. Up to date, too—there is a microphotograph of moon dust, pictures of the earth taken from space, models of the DNA double helix that really helps the most ignorant to see what happens, temples underwater and Venice, at high tide, in almost the same state.

Jane Fletcher

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WORLD'S WORK

International action-stations

By Patricia Crampton

In the 1950s, Erich Kästner, Astrid Lindgren and P. L. Travers were associated in a brave enterprise with a woman whose name is not, like theirs, a household word, but whose worldwide influence is still spreading, although she died twenty years ago. Beginning with the foundation of the International Youth Library in the dust and ashes of Munich in 1948, Jella Lepman went on, four years later, to launch the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), "to promote international understanding through children's books". In 1954 IBBY inaugurated the Hans Christian Andersen biennial award for the best children's writer, selected by an international jury. Great Britain, France, Germany and the United States have figured among the winners, as one would expect, but so too have Denmark, Finland, Italy, Spain and Sweden (twice). Since prizes for children's book illustrators were added to the original awards, artists from Czechoslovakia, Iran, Switzerland and the USSR have joined the ranks of those honoured.

Today, over forty countries have joined IBBY; it enjoys Category B (information and consultation) status with Unesco and is actively supported by that body; its Andersen Medal for illustrators indirectly led to the establishment of the now famous Biennale of Illustrations in Bratislava; many member countries send large delegations to its Congresses which are held in different parts of the world—and yet, in this, of all countries which produce and appreciate fine children's books, the British Section of IBBY is forced to struggle on with the subscriptions of a group of far-seeing and idealistic publishers and a handful of individuals who love children's books and think that they are of unique importance to international understanding.

The National Book League makes an absolutely essential contribution in the form of the British Section's Secretary—there would be no possibility of finding the funds for *her* work from the present membership—and the British Council has recently been able to make available a small, but greatly welcome, one-time subsidy.

With only these finances, and despite the completely voluntary work of the British Section's officers and the support of most of the well-known names in the children's book world in this country (though not yet of many of its writers), the British Section of IBBY is unable to pay its dues to the International Secretariat. Great Britain is therefore a participant without voting rights at IBBY Congresses (to which it sends a single delegate—none of the massive delegations of the USA and USSR, none of the automatic government support of the Scandinavians and Slavs), able only to pay its entrance fee for the Hans Andersen award and (so far, and with difficulty) the travelling expenses of a British member on the Andersen jury, for as long as the International Secretariat wants us to be represented there.

Seen from this side of the Channel, the situation looks bad enough: what is not sufficiently understood in this country is the view from the other side. We are used to the frustrating, teeth-gnashing spectacle of Britain failing to take part in trade fairs with the goods it makes best. But astonishingly, people still want some of the things we make; above all, the world has never ceased to want our writers and this is nowhere more true than in children's books. Talking recently to some of our most charming and sought-after children's authors, whose works are very well known abroad, I was astonished to find that, in their modesty, they had no idea what our children's books mean to other countries. To begin with, of course, there is the vast world of the old Empire, where if English is not the "native" language it is often still the only common language and English books retain a certain hold—more importantly, we in this country have an obligation to support, both morally and with practical experience, the efforts of these countries to provide worthwhile reading for their children. Then there is the vigorous interchange between Great Britain and the United States—their humour for our mysticism, their nullification for our traditions? And most interesting of all to our writers, the astonishing fact remains that the highly developed countries of Western Europe, our rich neighbours in and outside the EEC, continue to cherish our modern children's literature to the extent that in some of them as many as 15 per cent of the children's books published are translations of our own favourites.

That we have a great deal to be proud of is obvious. But it is not so easy to be proud when we can participate only as poor relations at the world's children's book centres, where our chief pride should lie in offering all that we have gloried in for well over a century to countries still at the stage where a handful of bright prints on poor quality paper is the best that they can afford for their children. The President of IBBY, Hans Halbey, is struggling to organize, through UNESCO, a paper bank which would to some extent alleviate this desperate situation. This is the kind of action which we should be supporting by our membership of IBBY; there is no comparable, world-wide organization through which the opportunity to help other countries is available so cheaply. (Britain's membership of IBBY costs the equivalent of about £200 at the current exchange rate for the Swiss franc; the subscription for individual members is only £3.)

What's in it for members? Nothing much, except that it is something positive that one can do. There is a regular newsletter, which contains copies of talks given by members of related organizations on children's books at conferences and symposia, news of award-winning books from all over the world, and of foreign visitors coming to Britain whom organizations may wish to invite to talk to them on the children's book scene abroad; notes on recent publications ("Help in Reading", "Books for the Multi-Racial Classroom", "Background to Children's Books"), in the general field of children's literature.

When Great Britain was sponsoring International Children's Book Day (Hans Andersen's birthday) to celebrate its first year of return to membership of IBBY in 1974—we joined with Cyprus and Poland, a pleasing thought—at least twenty major events were organized across the country, mainly through the Federation of Children's Book Groups, with exhibitions in stores, book-jacket competitions, story-telling sessions and so on. John Burningham designed a poster and Joan Aiken wrote the "message" to children on the theme "Take a Book Wherever You Go". Every year a different country sponsors the day and makes a poster available; Denmark's poster was a clever design by Ib Spang Olsen, illustrating an Andersen fairy-tale, which could be reorganized into a complete book after its display period was over.

The quarterly magazine of IBBY is *Bookbird* ($10, from the International Institute for Children's Literature and Reading Research, Fuhrmannsgasse 18a, Vienna), which has articles (not always in very good English, but it is not for us to complain), ranging from the acceptance speech by the latest Andersen winner from Denmark, through articles on criticism from America, on international trends in children's literature from France, to the reading habits of young Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Every issue also has a list of books from many countries which are recommended for translation.

Bookbird is now able to subsidize its budget by taking advertising, but it has been a bumpy road, and the willingness of Eastern Europe to take over its publication has not lessened the resolve of its editorial board to keep it in Vienna. Indeed, it is a constant struggle for the West, where inflation threatens culture along with—and in some cases more than—everything else, to keep up with the whole-hearted, state-backed participation of the Communist countries, many of whom have been making great strides in their own literature for children, but whose dominance would lose IBBY a great deal in terms of creativity, imaginative range and a modern literature for the young which is neither didactic nor mealy-mouthed.

I look forward with particular interest to the day when India (already a member) begins to submit its own books for the Hans Andersen prize, when Africa and Asia join South America in Continent-wide membership—bringing to IBBY both their problems and their unique contributions. National sections already organize static and travelling exhibitions which have covered 100 countries of the world, and here the developing countries, with often scanty resources, have done as much as the industrial nations. They have promoted book prizes, especially in countries where children's literature has been the Cinderella of publishing. They have run seminars, prepared book lists for international distribution and undertaken special studies, for instance into the teaching of reading. When the IBBY Congress was held in Rio de Janeiro three years ago, the British section was asked to supply a special exhibition of school library books, with a catalogue which in itself aroused excited interest in Latin America.

Future Congresses are planned in Würzburg (1978) and Prague (1980); the British section of IBBY has set its heart on holding the 1982 Congress in London, and the International Secretariat is very keen to see this happen. It is moving and inspiring to become conscious, when abroad, of the respect in which the British children's book tradition is held. There could be no better evidence of this than IBBY's willingness (now under some strain, in the general financial atmosphere) to accept British participation even when we cannot pay our way. But this deplorable and shameful situation cannot continue: the dedicated work going on at the International Secretariat and in many of the national sections cannot bear fruit unless all the children's and school librarians, and the teachers of English and foreign affairs and geography, and those publishers who are not already members become involved. Parents, too, have only to look back on the blissful days of childhood, when there was time to read, in order to want to help the children of the many countries where a book is an object too precious for a child's hands.

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Barbarian invasions

GOSCINNY and UDERZO:
Asterix and the Chieftain's Shield
Translated by Anthea Bell and Derek Hockridge
Hodder and Stoughton. £1.80. (340 21394 9)

DIK BROWNE:
Hägar the Horrible
Egmont/Methuen. 75p. (416 05210 X)

The empire of Asterix continues to grow. My personal researches into its expansion took a long step forward at the last Cannes Film Festival, where an opulent champagne party was thrown for the two creators, Goscinny and Uderzo, by the distributors of their forthcoming animated feature film—"Les 12 Travaux d'Asterix", I believe. The event took place in a balmy hotel garden, among tables laden not with boar, perhaps, but at least with wine; and affixed to the trees round about were original drawings of Uderzo's, showing off that vigour of line which I fear (not having seen the film as yet) may be lost in the animation process, where the energy-charge of single penstrokes is naturally sacrificed to the blur of movement. It was pleasant, anyway, to see, at close quarters the two genial maestri, even if they were wearing identical electric-indigo business suits: Goscinny, a roundish, balding, frizzy personage more or less permanently beaming; and Uderzo, a taller, rather more twitchy figure, but quite dashing in a *poète maudit* sort of way. (Anyone who has studied Kenneth Barlow, the resident Hamlet of *Coronation Street*, will recognize the type.) They made a good complementary pair, if a less spectacularly unequal one than Asterix and Obelix themselves. The way they tended to disappear into discreet scrummages of French film executives may, on reflection, have been ominous. But there is nothing about film executives that is not ominous, from the independent artist's point of view.

The present slice of Gaulish history, however, has little bearing on current trends in Asterix's empire-building. It is an old tale, published in France in 1968 under the title *Le Bouclier Arverne*; and it never was one of the best, being a rather bitty item about the recovery of Vercingetorix's lost shield, upon which Caesar, his envoys maltreated (ah, long-lost ablative!) intends to be carried on, in symbolic triumph before the humiliated Gauls. The shield has changed hands several times, unfortunately, and though this enables Goscinny and Uderzo to make some amusing play with the comic-strip equivalent of film-flashbacks, the story does get a bit lost among them. A certain strain shows in the translations of Derek Hockridge and Anthea Bell, too, though the Roman envoy Noxius Vapus will do very well. Fewer and fewer readers, I suppose, faced with a drunken Roman with hiccups in sequence, "Hic! Haec! Hoc!", will know what on earth he is on about.

The drawing is as fine as ever, and in set-pieces like Obelix's emptying a swimming pool by diving into it and the settling of a fallen leaf on the extremely tender stomach of Chief Vitalstatistix ("Oooouuuch!"), Uderzo displays his usual mastery of time and motion. There is also a demonstration of his psychological grasp of editing—what in film terms would be called "shot-selection". Here Asterix and Obelix, for a rarity have fallen out. We see them from behind, as they walk resolutely down the grass verges on opposite sides of a paved road—down the middle of which the hapless Dogmatix is padding in swivel-headed disbelief at this turn of events. There follow two frames in which the two heroes, seen separately, air their sniffish grievances; then one frame in which Asterix, silent and visibly melting, finds his foot straying inward towards the road; then a "single-shot" of Obelix, red-faced, with little puffs of embarrassment-steam issuing from his head, and his toe playing with the outer stone of the pathway.

Then at last, after a tense close-up of the increasingly perplexed dog, where indeterminate decision-making noises burst into the frame from either side, the quarrel is resolved. Asterix bounds across a broad frame into his friend's arms, and our point of view suddenly sweeps up to take in wide and idealistic panorama of distant hills, clouds, etc. A fir-tree bows in assent. The whole event could not have been better managed, visually, right down to the fact that the two friends' faces, pressed together in the reconciliatory embrace, are perfectly identical in their bliss, save for a minute distinction made in the thickness of the respective eyebrows.

Dik Browne's *Hägar the Horrible*, seemingly an American product, offers no such opportunity for pleasant technical browsing. Browne's is a very hasty, stripped-down, lightning-sketch style. It serves its purpose, but reminds me too much of all the dreadful assembly-line animation material (only one moving part at a time) which the BBC seems determined to inflict on its young television viewers. Browne's jokes are better that the television average, but they are also better than his characters. "Meet Hägar the Horrible—a hard-working barbarian businessman. He's in sacking and looting" is all very fine and open-ended, but its historical couldn't-care-less-ness is precisely the thing that Asterix is such a relief from. The basic scrupulosity of the Gaulish heroes—their faithfulness to themselves and to history—is something that makes a rare appeal to children. The Hägars, on the other hand, do not escape from the American domestic sit-com discipline, where Dad is restless and variously "incorrigible", Mum is materialistic, and the kid (Hamlet, in this instance) is a problem-child. Instead of creating myths, Browne jovially perpetuates the ones that children get at home, from television if not from their parents themselves.

Russell Davies

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Cosy communication

LEILA BERG:
Reading and Loving
Routledge and Kegan Paul. £2.75. (7100 84757)

Reading and Loving is a collection of bits and pieces mainly about children learning to read. As a children's author, Leila Berg has been creative and successful, but the self-assurance that has helped make her fiction so purposive and original has also tended to work against her sensitivity as a social critic. In *Reading and Loving*, for example, a child is king, forever seeking out genuine and joyful experiences, if only everyone else would leave him alone. But there are powerful, frustrating forces to be overcome, such as many parents, most teachers and almost every school. These adults so often misunderstand and mishandle the young that Miss Berg is several times caused to wonder how it is that their children ever learn to read, or indeed stay sane at all.

Sometimes she has a point; such broad criticism is bound to hit some targets. The rigidities and inequalities of our present class and educational systems do serve some children poorly, but others survive and sometimes do quite well. It is this inability to see how any working-class child could ever learn in a traditional educational setting that is the chief weakness of these essays. Where reading is concerned, Miss Berg's particular literary gifts may indeed suit many young readers, but not necessarily to the exclusion of other, different approaches too. For example, there is one piece describing the rapturous schoolroom reception given to her excellent Nipper series when read aloud by Leila Berg—their author. But far too much is drawn from this; Enid Blyton was also a very popular story-teller wherever she went, and even the despised Janet and John books have some young defenders, not exclusively from the middle classes.

In other words, things are more complicated than they are made to appear in these pages, where a general, diffuse sense of anger tends to blunt a more subtle understanding. Over the Nipper books, again, Miss Berg prefers to quote from the minority of attacking letters she received from teachers, rather than from the overwhelmingly positive response which has made the series such a literary and financial success. Some of the trivial criticisms she received, such as the objections to fish and chips or a work-shy Dad in her stories, do indeed make good copy, but there is almost no attempt to discover *why* some older teachers should feel in this particular way. It is also quite unjustified to then assume that such pedagogues are necessarily harmful to children in every other respect, as Miss Berg tends to do. The whole argument anyhow, that pupils only flourish in conditions where their own culture is recognized and accepted, is at times very over-simplified; today, the New Left as well as the Old Right can be heard occasionally critising the Nipper series for a patronizing, ghetto-minded approach to its audience. In the face of such excellent stories in their own right, such objections do not seem particularly valid, but when Miss Berg goes on to discuss language in general, and the supposed impossibility of real communication between different cultures, then she can indeed become far too pessimistic about the capacities of working-class children and in this sense, sometimes more reactionary than her conservative critics.

Even so, she is not the first author who writes better for than about her audience; she has still provided us with the most lively reading material to be found in primary schools today. For the present book, however, despite some useful random insights, it is more a case, unfortunately, of reading and feeling disappointed.

Nicholas Tucker

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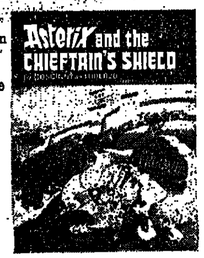
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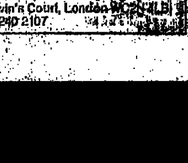


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Clued in

AIDAN CHAMBERS:
Cops and Robbers
Illustrated by Allan Manham
Kestrel. £3.75. (7226 5217 8)

Since the Penguin aviary began to include kestrels, there has begun to grow a smartly turned out series of Kestrel Anthologies (explorers, ghosts, spies, airmen), and now we have Aidan Chambers on *Cops and Robbers*. This is a good book in every possible sense, and by way of dispelling doubts about value for money let me say at the outset that the one hundred and twenty-five pages are large double-column pages, well designed and pleasing to the eye. The book is easy to read and tellingly illustrated by "incident-photos" (some of them set up for the occasion and rather pretending not to be) and skilful drawings by Allan Manham. It is an anthology drawn from the more exciting whodunnits of real life. Expressing no opinions, Mr Chambers presents the shoplifter, the bank robber, the cheque bouncer, the "disbursement of fortune" con-man, the paid informer, the smuggler, the receiver, the prisoner —and the police; and he gets them all just right, by choosing just the right passages for quotation. Any opinions are those of the quoted authors—Ruby Sparks the smash-and-grab pioneer, G. H. Torterdell "The Country Copper", policemen like John Capstick, Robert Fabian and John Gosling. And the book finishes with the opinion of the ex-prisoner in Tony Parker's "The Courage of his Convictions":

> Does any form of punishment have an effect on *me*?
> No, that's obvious, surely, isn't it?

Because it does not announce itself as written for the young (as I believe it was) *Cops and Robbers* will be the more likely to attract and reach them. It has the unusual virtue that it does not seem to have been—no abstruseness, none of those irritating little esotericisms with which crime-writers impress each other, none of the stupid obscenities of the criminal world. You could "safely leave it lying around".

The two best-told stories, it seemed to me, are the Battle of London Airport by airline detective Donald Fish and ex-superintendent Gosling's account of a perfectly typical confidence trick. A few queries present themselves: on page 14 someone suggests (I think it is Mr Chambers himself) that a shoplifter has not stolen his loot. The truth is that if he went in to steal, he has stolen the moment he picks it up: he is allowed to get outside only to anticipate and spoil the usual defence, "I was going to pay for it, I'm sorry".

And Mr Chambers is usually more reliable than one or two of the like Covent Garden or the New writers he calls upon: for example, Ruby Sparks has made him believe that "in the early Twenties motor cars were still quite rare", but in fact central London on a busy day was chock-a-block with them—at five o'clock on a Friday in the mid-1920s I have seen motor vehicles stationary from the Mansion House to Oxford Circus and senior policemen (but not their juniors) apoplectic with anxiety. And later Sparks, the get-away driver, is saying "cabbies and bus-drivers used to think they would block us, but either the horse or the driver always flinched and let us through". The horse! People would have rubbed their eyes to see a bus or cab pulled by a horse in the London of the Twenties. Either Ruby or his ghost writer pulled a fast one there. Mr Chambers, it is good to realize, was not alive then, or indeed until the next decade; which gives him time for many more of these excellent anthologies. Ruby Sparks was alive though, and that's what throws doubt on the rest of *his* stories.

C. H. Rolph

Watchdogs

GEOFFREY YOUNG:
Conservation Scene
How buildings are protected—and why
Kestrel. £2.75. (7226 5239 9)
Peacock. 75p. (14047 089 1)

Despite the bustle and activity of European Architectural Heritage Year there is still a shortage of books on conservation, especially introductory books suitable for children. Geoffrey Young is the director of Watch, the environmental project sponsored by *The Sunday Times*, and so is in an excellent position to fill this gap. In *Conservation Scene* he follows an obvious path from looking at buildings to worrying about them and fighting for them, and he ends with a *list of places to go for yet more* ideas. There are plenty of illustrations drawn from examples all over the country, not just old favourites Covent Garden or the New Town at Edinburgh.

In writing about conservation it is only too easy to adopt a goodies versus gangsters theme, something which Geoffrey Young avoids by describing rival points of view and leaving many questions unsettled: should this building be listed? Is it worth keeping just a façade?

What kinds of building should be given first priority? At points, though, it might have been better if he had taken a firmer hand. He centers past problems of appreciation in the opening chapter leaving some odd examples behind, such as the Woolworth's at Blackpool, remarkable for its size and for some*one having troubled over its design*, and shops in Middleton, Lancs, which are "at least unusual". His advice for those who want to find out more is to look up the *Buildings of England* in the local library, an experience which might well daunt children unfamiliar with architectural terminology and will certainly disappoint those who go to the Lancashire volumes in search of the buildings just mentioned.

At other points a little more detail would have done no harm. Someone who can tackle a chunk of Pevsner can probably digest the details of how a public inquiry works, or how an amenity society fights a case, particularly if concrete examples are given. Indeed, a blow-by-blow narrative of a case always carries more conviction than simple before and after descriptions. Children who are in training to fight our future *conservation* battles will need to know more precisely what it is they are fighting for and what the best tactics are.

Robert Thorne

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Kestrel. £2.75. (7226 5153 8)
Peacock. 75p. (14047 087 5)

Bird Count covers a number of aspects of ornithology not brought together in any other work. It is a book for the beginner, intended to introduce him to the types of study, the kinds of knowledge, that the amateur can gather with the use of only simple equipment and his wits. Humphrey M. Dobinson has succeeded in laying out a clearly readable book for anyone to follow.

While the book is very largely concerned with simple field studies, *Bird Count* is, perhaps, a somewhat misleading title since it does not cover the full scope of the work. The prime concern, it is true, is counting birds and large sections are devoted to techniques for doing so, for example, at roosts, in the breeding season, in winter and during migration. However, the author also deals with other studies such as finding nests and recording nest success, collections of material and, briefly, about ringing birds.

Space does not permit detailed description of the counting techniques, but they are largely well tried ones, usually based on surveys operated by the British Trust for Ornithology. The techniques are clearly described, and usually accompanied by illustrations of possible means of recording. More importantly, the significance of the collection of such data is made clear and Mr Dobinson explains the way in which a national picture can be built up from series of data collected by a coordinated network of ornithologists.

About one third of the text is given to methods of identification and recording of bird species, the majority being brief descriptions of the most common species. To me, this seems rather unnecessary; although simple books devoted to just this range of common birds are not widespread, there are a number of very good field guides which makes these sections unnecessary.

There are a few other minor comments. More could have been said about careful behaviour at the nest, especially in relation to tell-tale damage to the surrounding vegetation. Even perhaps the danger to the observer of visiting some nests *such as those of the Tawny Owl.* The note about the need for licences to visit the nests of certain, rarer, species could be more explicit. The useful book list would be even more helpful if brief notes on contents were included.

These minor criticisms notwithstanding, the book provides a good introduction to the beginner who wants to do something useful with his observations and should encourage many potential ornithologists.

Christopher Perrins

Home grown

RICHARD MABEY:
Street Flowers
Illustrated by Sarah Kensington
Kestrel. £3.25. (7226 5151 1)

There are two glaringly misleading mistakes of colour in the otherwise excellent illustrations of this book: the first is of a buddleia which is coloured rose-pink, though described in the caption as "lilac". Secondly, a willow-herb is depicted in two shades of clear, carmine red instead of the familiar magenta, and yet described in the text as "purple".

The scenes shown in the double-page illustrations by Sarah Kensington are most original and unusual and are certain to capture the imagination of the town child and encourage him or her to plant-hunt in unexplored and unlikely places. The text, by Richard Mabey, is equally well calculated to stimulate childish curiosity, and is full of the kind of information which answers all such questions as "How did it get here?", "Who planted it?" and "Can I take it home?". The author never talks down; the language is simple and direct but not over simplified. The delightful drawings scattered through the text are both sensitive and accurate.

Camilla Sykes

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Wars and all

JAMES BARBARY:
Puritan and Cavalier
The English Civil War
Gollancz. £3.75. (575 02163 2)

The English Civil War is a subject that never grows stale; new books about it are always welcome. *Puritan and Cavalier* is a well-illustrated history of the war, ambitiously combining a narrative of the military and political events with an explanation of what the conflict was about and a miscellany of interesting facts and details of seventeenth-century English life. Such details are certainly necessary if a book like this is to be more than just military history; but at times they seem overdone, to the extent of interrupting the flow of the narrative. And by devoting too much space to them, James Barbary has been obliged to over-simplify where he should be more explicit.

Thus, having chosen, for dramatic effect, to begin his narrative with Charles I's attempt to arrest the Five Members, he gives the impression that the Commons were, at the beginning of 1642, solidly hostile to the King with the exception of a few courtiers; whereas in fact Parliament was then much more sympathetic towards him than it had been a year earlier, owing to Pym and the extremists having overplayed their hand during the previous autumn; it was this which made Charles's attempt on the Five Members such a tragic mistake. And even after that unfortunate affair, Charles had the support of the Parliamentary moderates; men who, led by Falkland and Hyde (who, incidentally, do not feature in the narrative at all), had worked during the previous year to curb the King's arbitrary power; and having done so, as they believed, sufficiently, were now firmly on Charles's side against Pym and the extremists.

Where it does not suffer from over-simplification, the book is, on the whole, fair to both sides in the conflict. It is, however, less than fair when it states as a point of fact that if Prince Rupert and his troops had made their dash to London after Edgehill, they would have plundered the city. This is what Rupert's enemies in the Royalist camp believed; and what, to a certain extent, they succeeded in making the King believe; but from what is known of Rupert, it seems likely that he would have done *his utmost to prevent his men* from plundering the capital. Certainly his behaviour in the circumstances would have been as irreproachable as that of Sir Thomas Fairfax, of whose virtues the author is constantly reminding us. It is quite right to give Fairfax, who was a very honourable soldier, his due; but Rupert deserves his due also.

James Barbary is skilful in weaving together the many different strands of his narrative. He shifts his scene to Scotland, to Ireland, to the universities—he avoids making the mistake which so many writers have made of assuming that because the University of Cambridge was situated in East Anglia, it was Roundhead—and even to America. Unfortunately, the writing is a little amateurish in places, and the book is marred by a certain carelessness. One wonders what grounds the author has for stating that Sir Jacob Astley was a Catholic, and suspects that he has mixed him up with the Catholic Royalist general, Sir Arthur Aston. Yet another Cavalier general, Goring, is referred to as "Lord George Goring", which he never was; and the Irish Macdonnells who fought with Montrose are referred to as "MacDonalds"; true, they and the Scottish MacDonalds were of the same stock; but that is no reason for not getting their name right. And in the bibliography, the two leading authorities on the Civil War, contemporary and present-day, appear respectively as "Edward H. Clarendon" and "Cicely V. Wedgewood" (*sic*). Such carelessness is particularly inexcusable in a book for the young, who are all too prone to fall into the attitude of "what does it matter?" without being encouraged to by books that are meant to be instructive.

Adam Roberts

Bomb disposal

JOHN COX:
Overkill
The story of modern weapons
Kestrel. £2.75. (7226 5343 3). Peacock. 80p (14047 086 7)

In the thirty years since the end of the Second World War nuclear weapons have been continuously improved and have become central features of the arsenals of five states; but they have not been used in war. In other words, the world seems to have come to live with the bomb. John Cox refuses to accept this state of affairs, and has written a lively guide-cum-tract to think; and the account of a nuclear accident in Carolina differs inexplicably from the authoritative version given by Dr Ralph Lapp in 1962. A more fundamental weakness of the book is that its advocacy of general and complete disarmament simply does not take adequate account of some of the central difficulties of that approach; and the brief book list at the end does not include some of the most important literature on disarmament.

With its concise text and numerous photographs, cartoons, diagrams and quotations, *Overkill* provides a readable introduction to an atrocious world. If the judgments are questionable here and there, one should remember that this book is not intended as the last word on the subject, but as a first rough outline.

Mark Bence-Jones

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Here be dragon-slayers

MAX LÜTHI:
Once Upon a Time
On the Nature of Fairy Tales.
179pp. Indiana University Press. Paperback, £2.25.

On most literary subjects too many books have been written; on folk-tales far too few, that is, good ones, suitable as general introductions. *Once Upon a Time*, a short paperback, by Max Lüthi, is probably the best available. It is based on a series of radio talks given in 1963, with an extra chapter added at the suggestion of the translators. There are notes to each chapter with references to more technical studies, and these have been made much more useful by Francie Lee Utley, who has added most of the best things that have been written about the folktale in English. Professor Utley has also written a lucid and sensible introduction, which includes comments on each chapter, as well as an outline of some of the general problems of folk-tale studies. The only complaint that could be made is that the translation is sometimes a little obscure, and doubtless a reader of the original *Es war einmal: vom Wesen des Volksmärchens* would get more out of it.

Although England was the cradle of folklore and folklorists, the fairy-tale is no longer a good academic subject in this country. In the land of Clouston, Morrland and Andrew Lang, very few people now seem to show any interest in or knowledge of the subject. I became seriously interested in folk-tales about a quarter of a century ago, but dropped out because I could not find anyone to converse with about them. The trouble is perhaps that the discipline is rather like botany: there is such a lot of collecting and sorting to be done before you can start to theorize. You are forced to deal with the Aarne-Thompson *Tale-Types* and the serial numbers of each *Märchen-typus* (Mt for short); and then with the still more formidable *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, by Stith Thompson. The standard textbook, *The Folktale* (1946) is also by Thompson and naturally tends to be classificatory in its approach rather than interpretative. The annotations that have become attached to the principal tales are almost endless, as can be seen in the *Anmerkungen* to Grimm by Bolte and Polivka: there are so many variants in so many languages. These are fascinating to read, since they demonstrate the unity of Eastern and Western culture.

I have much enjoyed reading the notes in Penzer's *Ocean of Story* and even more those of Wesselski in *Märchen des Mittelalter*; such studies show the drift of stories from China into India, thence to the Arabic world, thence largely by the intermediation of the Jews to Western Europe. But I must confess that many people find this kind of study mere pedantry. It does not seem to be fashionable today: Lüthi mentions hardly any variants of European tales that originated outside of Europe, though Professor Utley does fill in this gap by mentioning some useful books. Apart from these and other kinds of pure folk-tale scholarship, there remains the difficult question of interpretation. Everyone at some time in his life has enjoyed these highly structured stories of wonders; but it is difficult to explain why one enjoys them so much, for the ordinary methods of literary criticism do not seem easy to apply. Fairy-tales are obviously symbolical but the meaning of the symbols is not easy to determine; and the subject has been bedevilled by fashionable Jungianism (which to a non-believer is scarcely more credible than astrology).

It is in the field of interpretation that Lüthi has most to give. Although as a Swiss he is bound to be slightly sympathetic to Jung, he does not consider that psychoanalytic explanations are exhaustive. "Thus, one may view the battle with the dragon and the encounter with the helping animal as the conflict with unconscious forces within one's own self. Both times this encounter with the unconscious leads to a higher stage of development, an enlarged awareness. However, we do not believe that such interpretations capture the total significance of the fairy tale. . . . The battle with the dragon is not only a symbol for the struggle with the dark side of our unconscious, what is evil or sinister within us; it is, of course, a symbol for the struggle against evil in the world. In a well-known fairy tale, the animal prince or the animal bride breaks the spell and becomes a real human prince or princess for the sake of the hero or heroine. This tale certainly portrays much more than just the turning of one's consciousness to his own unconscious, or the union of intellect and soul. It also depicts for example, the ambivalent relationship between man and woman. . . ." Well, it could be like that. At least Lüthi faces up to the fact that all human speech is ambiguous, and therefore all stories, including the parables of the New Testament are capable of multiple interpretations, without any hope of certainty. The fairy-tales, like the stories of Kafka, are none the worse for that.

The first chapter, subtitled "The meaning and form of Fairy Tales", analyses the tale-type of "the Sleeping Beauty". In a sensitive discussion he fails to mention the finest example of the sleeping beauty in all art, which is Wagner's *Ring*, in particular the end of *Die Walküre* and the end of *Siegfried*, concerning Brunnhilde's magical sleeping and awakening. In Chapter 3 he discusses the "Dragon Slayer" (Mt 300), the most basic of all *märchen*, without mentioning that this story is transformed into *Tristan*, although it is not used much in the part of the story that Wagner used for his music-drama. Chapter 9, on Riddle Stories, does discuss the Turandot story, which went through various versions before Puccini used it, and is perhaps the finest of all folktale operas after Wagner; Professor Utley adds a note referring to Orff's *Die Kluge* (The Clever Girl), another opera based on riddling, which I do not yet know but now hope to discover. Nothing in Puccini or Orff, however, could possibly come up to Wagner's cycle, an immense set of linked folktales, with adult commentary on the problems of life—Tolkien for the grown-ups. Opera does seem to be the best medium for the translation of the fairy tale into high art—yet perhaps ballet could be even better, witness Stravinsky's *Fire Bird*. In Chapter 8 Lüthi discusses "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down thy golden hair". He seems to find it easy, whereas I find it impossible, to disregard that fake fairy-tale, Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a ridiculous plot about a silly girl, which has reached immortality because of Debussy's incomparable music. Music solves all difficulties.

I would not like to guess what folk-tales or Wagner's operas are "about"; they seem, however, to be related to the experiences of ordinary life: love, depression, anxiety, death, and so on. But perhaps anxiety is a basic theme: it has been said that one person out of four falls victim to an acute attack of anxiety at least once in a lifetime, for no apparent reason. This is true of primitives and peasants as well as of intellectuals. The fairy-tales seem to be talking about this, when they describe descents into the underworld, encounters with monsters and the like. And they talk optimistically about the possibility of getting out of states of misery, what Lüthi calls the "processes of development and maturation. Every man has within him an ideal image, and to be king, to wear a crown, is an image for the ascent into the highest possible kingdom". Despite the poor English, I like that, as also I like this sentence on the next page: "The child, as the fairy-tale age, is fascinated not by the upward social movement but by the overcoming of dangers and entry into the realm of glory, whether this is depicted as the realm of the sun and stars or as an earthly kingdom of unearthly splendour."

The best thing about fairy-tales is that they recognize superbly that our lives are ruled by luck. Why does the youngest son, seventh son of a seventh son, win the princess on the glass mountain? He is a bold lad, to be sure, and he has been kind to assorted helpful animals. The stories imply it can mean nothing in comparison to the immense help given by the goddesses of chance and randomness. By all means be bold and kind to animals. The stories imply it can do no harm; but do not expect success unless luck, the invisible goddess of the fairy-tale, says Yes.

Matthew Hodgart

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TLS Commentary

Golden wonders

"I have just returned from the Academy", Charles Robert Leslie wrote in 1838, "where I think we shall have an amusing exhibition. There are Queens of all sorts and sizes, as you may suppose, *good, bad*, and indifferent." His opinion could equally well be applied to the show which is now to be seen in the private apartments of the Royal Academy (open until July 30). It takes its inspiration, however, not from a new monarch, but from the jubilee year of 1887 and the special numbers of periodicals which looked back over a reign of fifty years. And it is indeed itself like a three-dimensional, twopence-coloured illustrated newspaper, presenting not only reproductions but also the large, glossy originals from the royal collection.

Leslie found it bizarre that a young girl of eighteen should be depicted in Wilkie's striking portrayal of her first council, unattended by any female and surrounded by the greatest dignitaries in the land. Not that the Queen stood alone for long. Paired with Prince Albert, she was assured of a handsome escort in uniform or hunting kit, embellished with the Garter or the Golden Fleece as the occasion demanded. She is sketching at Loch Laggan was "quite a new conception, it will tell a great deal", but Winterhalter did his best with the Isle of Wight to make it look like a tropical resort. The opportunity for portraying more dash and swagger was not missed whenever meetings with foreign royalty were arranged. Thus, by 1850 the combination of the homely and the gaudy we now associate with the British royal family had been indelibly stamped as their iconographical property.

One oval portrait of the Queen by Winterhalter, her "surprise" for her husband's birthday in 1843, is almost disbabille compared with the stiff intricacies of formal fashion, but the more intimate side of royal taste is not explored any further. In his introduction to the catalogue, Jeremy Maas, the organizer, cautiously disclaims any intention to provide a comprehensive survey of Victorian royal patronage. To point out that in the early years of her reign the Queen learnt under her husband's guidance, and their relationship is vividly symbolized in a tableau of the Prince's portrait bust contemplating the Academy's Michelangelo Tondo with a bust of the Queen gazing at him. Perhaps their most ambitious commission was Dyce's fresco for Osborne depicting "Neptune resigning to Britannia the Empire of the Sea", an oil sketch of which hangs in the show. But such enlightenment does not seem to have penetrated that notoriously conservative stronghold of English art, official portraiture. The Prince Consort, despite his cultivation, never got round to arranging for his wife to be depicted as a Nazarene-inspired Britannia. After his death, marks for likeness constituted the main, indeed probably the only criteria in the Queen's critical apparatus. Mr Maas quotes the opinion of Sir Henry Ponsonby, her private secretary, that the Queen did not care for pictures and actively disliked galleries. For all her drawing and etching lessons, nobody ever had the outrageous gallantry to address her as "We artists, ma'am".

The distinction between art patronized in private and portraits to be suffered as a public duty was accepted, if bitterly, by the artists of the time. Leslie's biographer, Tom Taylor, remarked, the honour scarcely compensated for the "anxiety, fret, and loss of time insuparable from having to paint exalted personages, whose days are too much at the bidding of state and ceremonial engagements to allow of their giving to a painter either long or regular sittings". But the tedium endured by Leslie of hanging round Windsor with only the servants to chat to was a minor irritation compared with the prolonged agony suffered by Frith when he was commissioned to paint the marriage of the Prince of Wales at St George's Chapel in 1863.

Jeremy Maas's fascinating study of *The Prince of Wales's Wedding* (100pp. Cameron and Tayleur/David and Charles, £5.95) reveals the cavalier behaviour of those who participated in the necessary sittings. In the aftermath of the ceremony, the Danish royal family drifted off home, the royal couple was caught up in a mass of engagements and the bridesmaids were sacrificed to their mamas' social diaries. Dresses were altered, appointments continually postponed or cancelled and the rudeness of many of those who did eventually come to the Bayswater studio made life hell for Frith and his family. Young Prince William of Prussia, the future Kaiser, who had excelled himself at the ceremony by biting the bared knees of his luemophiliac cousin Leopold, proceeded to cover himself with oilpaint and hit out at Frith when he attempted to remove it. Yet none of this is apparent in the impressive calm of the finished work. It is one of the finest in the exhibition, and, despite a certain woodenness where Frith was forced to resort to likenesses to carte-de-visite, successfully incorporates the unwieldy cast into a setting of golden splendour.

Frith received polite thanks and £3,000 for his pains, which did little to compensate for the loss of lucrative commissions. More gratifying was the public reaction when the picture first appeared at the Royal Academy in 1865 and two policemen and an iron rail had to hold back the crowds. Holman Hunt's painting of London Bridge packed with revellers and illuminated with flares on the night of the wedding also testifies to the outburst of popular enthusiasm. For the masses, the first opportunity for public rejoicing since the death of the Prince Consort in 1861 must have been a wild release from the prevailing gloom. Such events kept the royal family alive for the nation and the artist and artisan served as their public relations officers. The countless editions of fine engravings, of Art-Union statuettes, of coins, stamps and medals, elaborately decorated porcelain and crude, transfer-printed pottery mass-produced their image for an enormous market. It was appropriate that the Queen's own appetite for memorabilia, indulged within the privacy of her palaces, should have been reflected and magnified in her manufacturing empire outside—and both are well represented in the exhibition.

The Golden Jubilee of 1887 marked the climax to such industry, an event for which the Queen wrote in her journal she would always have "the most gratifying and heart-stirring memories". The celebrations ranged from solemn services and thanksgiving prayers to specially composed songs and waltzes. It is impossible not to be impressed by the scale of invention as well as the confident authority of the portraits, qualities which may well be in short supply when the next Golden Jubilee is proclaimed.

Celina Fox



The five-year-old Prince Napoleon Louis, second son of Louis Bonaparte, painted by Jean-Baptists Isabey at Fontainebleau in 1810: from the Holzscheiter collection of miniatures to be sold at Sotheby's on March 28.

Fifty years on . . .

There is one punctilio that should be carefully observed by every white man who writes about the Negro in America. Unless he prints the word "Negro" with an initial capital, he is likely to give great offence to coloured readers. The distinction may seem a trifling one, but it connotes the difference between regarding the coloured population as a class, with the implication that it is of a subordinate status, and recognizing it as a race which has made an independent contribution, like English, Scottish and other immigrants, to the formation of the general community of the United States. . . .

This book will leave upon its readers a very definite impression of the great advance that has been made by the American Negro since his emancipation. Whether we look at the gains of this period in industry, in technical and professional education, or in general culture, the progress is unmistakable. It will surprise many of us, for instance, to learn that there are now seventy-two Negro banks in the United States, and that the total assets of the Negro insurance companies are estimated at $6,500,000. "In many communities in the South", Professor Dowd tells us, "one will find colonies of prosperous Negro landowners." While the white people reduced their illiteracy from 17 to 6 per cent between 1930 and 1920, the Negroes reduced theirs from 70 to 22.9 per cent, and that in spite of the fact that in the South the standard of expenditure on Negro education has been very much lower than that on the education of the whites. And some Negroes are now to be found in almost every university in the North and West. Yet there are dark sides to the picture. The Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, designed to secure political rights for the Negro, has been so manipulated as to become practically a dead letter. There is still a melancholy tale of lynchings and race riots. . . . Even in the North and West expedients have been devised for protecting the white man from too close a contact with the coloured. . . .

We may infer, however, from Professor Dowd's discussion of the problem, that the present situation might be substantially alleviated if the white people of America would take the trouble to acquaint themselves at first hand with the capacities and achievements of the better sort of Negro. . . . Alike in the North and in the South, he reports, the contact of the races has, generally speaking, been narrowing; and this diminishing personal contact "has resulted in an increasing ignorance and distrust of each for the other, and a growing aloofness and mutual animosity".

From the review of The Negro in American Life *by Jerome Dowd in the* TLS *of March 24, 1927. The review was written by H. Harwill.*

Eastern approaches

It is hard to imagine the last hundred years or so in Western art without the Japanese print. Some Manet backgrounds, for example, would not be there, nor some Whistler foregrounds; a few flat colour patterns in Van Gogh would be missing, and some bold black-and-white schemes by Aubrey Beardsley would never have been hatched. There would be a gaping hole in Miró's portrait of E. C. Ricart, and Victor Pasmore would have lost the wave that began his "Spiral Motif: Coast of the Inland Sea". In spite of all this, opportunities to look at good collections of Japanese prints are rare these days, and it is nice to have a chance to see a broad range of work by one of the late eighteenth-century masters: 168 prints and other items by Utamaro, including an original woodblock and books, largely brought together by Hugueette Berès for exhibition in Paris, are on show at Wildenstein's until April 6.

In our grandfathers' time prints such as these, boxed up in funereal frames, patterned the parlour walls. And anyone who has become too used to those black-edged images, with their now faded colours, dusty fringes, cockled corners and ruckled midriffs, should go to Wildenstein's to catch the butterfly brilliance of originals that are in fine condition. Exquisite yellows, stones and browns, salmon pinks and reds, greens and greys, fill the space between curving lines as thick as your thumb or fine as wires. There are stunning technical tricks: reflections in mirrors; veils of hair, or hair covered by light gauze veils; figures seen through delicate green blinds; white skin shining seductively through muslin or lighting up the gaps in the folds of a kimono.

Utamaro was a product of a male-dominated society, and naturally drew beautiful women, girls from Green Houses, and (rather fewer) powerful men. But within these limits he was a master of moods as well as of line and colour. The theatre was the subject of some early work, yet he was good at scenes of repose and particularly deft at the moments that lie between the dramatic and the tranquil, depicting imminent tensions with a suggestion of Sikonic humour (usually at the expense of women) or a touch of sexuality. One print has a baby's bottom in the foreground while my lady peers at herself, her tongue between her lips, in a mirror behind.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Essays and Poems and Simplicity, A Comedy
Edited by Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy
Professor Halsband and Dr. Grundy have edited what would probably have pleased Lady Mary, and certainly pleases us, most of all, her collected *Essays and Poems* and her comedy, *Simplicity*. . . . This is the most entertaining of all her volumes, for it is the most herself.' Sir William Haley in *The Times*. This is the first edition for over a century, and includes many hitherto unpublished poems. Illustrated £14.50

The Economic System in the United Kingdom
Edited by Derek Morris
This book enables businessmen and students to analyse and understand the management of the British economy. The central chapters on Inflation and Growth are followed by a discussion of the objectives and instruments of government economic policy and chapters on Incomes Policy, Fiscal Policy, Monetary Policy, Demand Management, Monopolies, Nationalized Industries and Medium-term Planning. £10 paper covers £4.95

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This textbook is intended primarily for university undergraduates in anthropology and the other human sciences, and will also appeal to those interested in the scientific analysis of the human condition. Second edition illustrated £10 paper covers £5.50

Oxford University Press

To the Editor

The Sistine Chapel

Sir,—Before any zealous Sistine Chapel watcher accuses me of not knowing my right hand from my left may I explain that, through circumstances beyond either my control or yours, I was unable to see a correlation between the text and the illustrations to my piece (March 18) before you went to press and was thus (perhaps) over-persuaded by your sub-editor to reverse certain of my original references to the four corner panels?

The matter is rather complex. The camera cannot lie, but the viewpoint of the panoramic view of the whole Sistine ceiling which you showed is that of a man standing on his head. When a visitor enters the chapel from the door end, he sees before him at the far end of the chapel behind the altar the Christ of the Last Judgment with his right arm raised and the Virgin on his right, that is to the observer's left. Jonah, immediately above, faces in the same direction as the Christ but looks upwards instead of downwards. The corner panel of the Brazen Serpent is on the observer's right, that of the execution of Haman on the observer's left. Comparably, if the observer stands at the altar end of the chapel and looks towards the door, he sees, high up near the vault, the Prophet Zechariah facing on the observer's right and towards David decapitating Goliath with the Judith and Holofernes scene behind him on the observer's left. Your illustration, like that of nearly all the standard picture books, gives the impression that several of these lefts and rights are reversed and, alas, as finally printed my text does the same!

EDMUND LEACH.

King's College, Cambridge.

Boulez

Sir,—In his review of *Boulez* (March 11), Samuel Lipman characterizes my assessment as "sharply negative". He writes I find Boulez "has failed to be a great composer, a great conductor of a wide range of music, or an honourable figure in terms of his own musical commitments".

Perhaps it will help your readers' grasp of the genuine meaning of my book if I quote a few passages. Page 16: "To many serious people Boulez is a musical genius, the greatest living composer, and . . . I concur with that estimate." Page 210: "Boulez conducts what he loves magnificently." Page 243: "Boulez is not alone in suffering from motives that appear less than generous in spirit and heart. . . . Competition pervades every aspect of contemporary life and music is no exception to the rule." As though in opposition to my beliefs, Mr Lipman concludes his essay with the statement that Boulez "has made us rethink the foundations of composition and performance". How he does that is the story of my book.

Recalling the Japanese film, *Rashomon*, reviewers find totally different portraits of Boulez. Your critic found one that was unequivocally black. The man at the Sunday *New York Times Book Review* described my tone as one of "critical affection". In a large mid-western paper, I was accused of being so "enthralled by Boulez" that I accepted some of his judgments without question. What greater tribute can one pay a figure than to devote five years learning what one can about him and the music he makes. To discover the whole truth is never possible. The only thing a writer can try to do is tell his reader nothing but the truth.

JOAN PEYSER.

19 Charlton Street, New York City.

'The File on the Tsar'

Sir,—As custodians of the set of the Sokolov file of which Anthony Summers and Tom Mangold have made great capital, the librarian and curators of the Houghton Library at Harvard now feel that some comment by them should be made in a paper war from which they have so far abstained. Mr Summers's remark in his letter of March 4 suggests to us that there may be some virtue in setting the record straight:

As for the files we do take seriously, the original dossier of Investigator Sokolov, Mr Salisbury suggests that we did not "find" them, and that scholars have known all along where they were. I suggest he asks any Romanov scholar, and the Curator of the Harvard library. . . . Indeed the papers have been there for years, but only the librarians and the donor knew, and they did not realize the rarity of what they had. . . .

The papers have indeed been in the collection of this library since June, 1964, through the generosity of Bayard L. Kilgour, Jr, of Cincinnati, Ohio. Over the years Mr Kilgour built almost single-handedly one of the most remarkable collections of Russian belles-lettres as well as historical materials in the Western world, and virtually all of it has been donated to the Harvard library.

When Mr Kilgour purchased the dossier at an earlier date from a New York dealer, he knew very well the importance of what he was acquiring. As soon as the Sokolov file was placed in the Houghton Library it was publicly catalogued and was then available to any scholar who had the wit and interest to look in the library catalogue for it, and an extensive and detailed typed inventory was bound and placed on the open shelves in our Reading Room. There was never any doubt on the part of either Harvard librarians or Mr Kilgour that the papers cast some light on a crucial incident in Russian history, whether the story they told was veracious or coloured by the exigencies of propaganda. No attempt was made to conceal their acquisition or their importance.

They were, in fact, announced in the published annual report of the Houghton Library for 1963-64 (Cambridge, 1965), page 71: ". . . a set of file copies, in seven volumes, of the inquest on the execution of the Russian imperial family. It contains transcripts of testimony, maps and plans, and various other evidence, each item authenticated by the official investigator, N. A. Sokolov". This printed report was widely circulated and can be consulted in most major research libraries: in England, for example, in the British Library, the Bodleian, the Cambridge University Library, and elsewhere.

Some may therefore think it at least mildly disingenuous for the Sokolov dossier to be announced in 1976 as a sensational "discovery" at the end of a long Holmesian trail. It has been in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for more than a decade, with a published announcement and cards in the catalogue to locate it for any competent investigator. That Professor Pipes's interests have led him in other directions is not necessarily to his discredit.

We strongly object to our depiction as a group of innocents unaware of the significance of what they had stumbled into. Readers of this tedious and contentious correspondence, which I hope will shortly be treated with *TLS*'s "three-asterisk" symbol for the ending of controversy that has outlived both usefulness and interest, can judge for themselves who it was who "stumbled into" the Sokolov dossier.

W. H. BOND.

Librarian of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

Sir,—Now that Anthony Summers (Letters, March 4) has descended to calling my review of his book "blinkered, hysterical and carping", I shall not imitate his manners. I suppose I ought to be rubbing my hands over an opponent who resorts to personal insult. It is my eyes that I blame when I read his tabulated assertions in his attempt to "put the record straight".

Mr Summers summons me to tell him about the alleged "Romanov fortune" of which "I have found traces". I have never mentioned the subject. Mr Summers is confusing me with someone else.

Mr Summers "would be fascinated to see the evidence of the Bolshevik commissars" who have confirmed the fact of the massacre. I have already given their names—Trotsky, whose diary was contemporary, though not published till some years later; Bykov who published his own accounts in 1921 and 1925, Beloborodov who gave his version in an interview in Moscow in 1927 and Volkov who made his confession or boast to Beloborodovsky in Warsaw in 1925, although it was not published till 1930.

All these accounts come from Bolshevik commissars and none of them is dubious. Trotsky speaks for himself. Bykov is first-hand. There is no reason to reject Beloborodov's interview. It will take more than Mr Summers's vapourings to destroy Besedovsky, whose report of Volkov's story was accepted in toto by Melgunov, by far the most authoritative Russian writer on the subject.

I have no doubt Carl Ackerman was a distinguished New York journalist; it is the more regrettable that he let himself be grossly taken in by the story of one "Domnin, a former majordomo of the Tsar", according to which the Emperor is said to have been shot after a trial, while the rest of his family was allowed to survive. *The man called Domnin* was ever in the imperial household and this transparently bogus tale of the Emperor's farewell dialogue with his faithful valet is crammed with totally fictitious names like "General Dogert", "*Prince* Gendrikov" and "Colonel Sukart of the General Staff". The *New York Times* printed Ackerman's "scoop" in the form of an interview with Domnin and it was translated into Russian by General Diotrichs. (Vladivostok 1922 Part I, pages 52-57.)

I repeat what I have already written. The fact that no bodies were discovered at or near Ekaterinburg produced an epidemic of tales of survival and/or escape in the Urals and Siberia in the months of 1918 and in 1919. It was not at all surprising that reports of foreign journalists were deceived by some of these circumstantial and plausible rumours. Kolchak was deceived himself. His Minister of Justice, Professor Starynkevich, was persuaded by Sergeyev (not Tolstoy as printed by slip in my letter of January 28) that he was the first high official in the government to enlighten him.

As for my own qualifications, much dislike blowing my own trumpet, I can only say that my reputation as a historian rests on the solid foundation of my life has been spent in studying Russian history (especially the last years of the Empire and the collapse), that I have followed the Anastasia case very closely since it was revived at Hamburg in 1957, and that I have at least read most of the published Russian material about Ekaterinburg, which is more than Messrs Summers and Mangold appear to have done.

IGOR VINOGRADOFF.

Broughton Grange, Banbury, Oxfordshire.

Among this week's contributors

MICHAEL AGOURSKY is a member of the Soviet and East European Research Centre, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

MICHAEL ARIS is a Research Fellow of *St John's College, Oxford.*

MAX BELOFF's books include *The Future of British Foreign Policy*, 1969, and *The Intellectual in Politics*, 1970.

JOHN MORTON BLUM's most recent book is *V was for Victory*, 1976.

PETER CONRAD is the author of *The Victorian Treasure-House*, 1971.

ROBIN CORMACK is a Lecturer at the Courtauld Institute, London.

ROY FOSTER's *Charles Stewart Parnell* was published last year.

SIR PETER GRETTON's books include *Maritime Strategy: A Study of British Defence Problems*, 1965, and *Crisis Convoy*, 1974.

GEOFFREY GRIGSON's *The Goddess of Love* was published last year.

J. F. C. HARRISON is the author of *The Early Victorians 1832-51*, 1971.

MICHAEL HAMBURGER's books include *The Truth of Poetry*, 1970, and *Art as Second Nature*, 1975.

MARY JACOBUS is a Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

P. N. JOHNSON-LAIRD's books include *The Psychology of Reasoning*, 1972.

EUGENE KAMENKA's books include *The Ethical Foundations of Marxism*, 1962, and *The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach*, 1970.

STEPHEN KOSS's *Asquith* was published last year.

WILLIAM LETWIN is the author of *The Origins of Scientific Economics*, 1963.

JOHN LYNCH is Professor of Latin American History at the University of London.

CYRIL MANGO is Bywater and Sotheby Professor of Byzantine and Modern Greek Literature and Language at the University of Oxford.

EDWARD MILLER is the Master of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

SIR CECIL PARROTT was Ambassador to Czechoslovakia from 1964 to 1966.

GEORGE PHILIP is a lecturer in American Politics at the London School of Economics.

FRITZ RADDATZ is the author of *Marx: eine politische Biographie*, 1975.

VERNON SCANNELL's most recent collection of poems *The Loving Game* was published last year.

ALAN SHERSTON is Senior Lecturer in English Language and Literature at the University of Manchester.

A. W. B. SIMPSON is Professor of Law at the University of Kent.

JULIAN SYMONS's recent novels include *The Plot Against Roger Rider*, 1973, and *The Three Pipe Problem*, 1975.

A. J. P. TAYLOR's books include *Europe: Grandeur and Decline*, 1967, and *Beaverbrook*, 1972.

LAURIE TAYLOR is the author of *Deviance and Society*, 1971.

HUGH TINKER's most recent book is *Separate and Unequal: India and the Indians in the British Commonwealth 1920-1950*, 1975.

JOHN WILLETT is the author of *Expressionism*, 1971.

RAYMOND WILLIAMS's books include *Culture and Society*, 1958, and *Keywords*, 1976.

CHAIM ZAFRANI is a lecturer in Laws at Queen Mary College, London.

Enver Hoxha's Albania

Sir,—I am sorry that Anton Logoreci (Letters, March 11) considers my appreciation of his book to have been "grudging" and am glad to acknowledge that his is the most up to date of the three books on Albania that I reviewed. The very fact that he covers events up until 1976 makes all the more puzzling the absence from his otherwise admirably full bibliography of any mention of either of the other two books under review.

I had previously given Mr Logoreci the benefit of the doubt and assumed that this curious omission probably had something to do with publication delays. I was clearly being too charitable. For Mr Logoreci's intemperate annoyance at being reviewed in what he considers to be such bad company makes it abundantly clear that he chose not to mention them on grounds of ideological prejudice. Such selectivity, I would suggest, ill becomes an author who sets himself up as a paragon of objectivity.

Mr Logoreci's refusal even to acknowledge the existence, in a very limited field, of two other up-to-date books in English on Albania was particularly reprehensible in the case of Ramadan Marmullaku's book. For this is fully documented, whereas Mr Logoreci supplies a bare handful of references. I do not need Mr Logoreci to tell me that Mr Ash's book is essentially an exercise in official propaganda. That this is so was made abundantly clear in my review and should have been apparent to all but the most wilfully obtuse. My point was precisely that in studying societies as closed as Albania and China one cannot afford simply to ignore the official line. How on earth Mr Logoreci thinks that he could begin to make sense of the current political situation in China without reference to the "outpourings of the Chinese press and radio", however unpalatably distressing he might find these to be, is quite beyond me.

RICHARD CLOGG.

King's College, University of London.

Sir,—I very much enjoyed reading Richard Clogg's excellent and comprehensive article on Albania (February 25). When recently I was engaged in some research for two articles I wished to write on that country, I was amazed at the paucity of material, and was surprised therefore that he omitted to mention *Illyria Reborn* by Dymphna Cusack, published in 1966. To my knowledge Miss Cusack is to date the only English-speaking author of the Western world to be welcomed in Albania and to travel extensively there.

There are, inter alia, two particular unexplained mysteries about Albania which Professor Clogg did not mention. Firstly, why does the Bank of England maintain silence about the whereabouts of gold deposited there, which was part of Albanian assets in this country taken by Britain from the Bank of Rome in 1943 in pursuance of its *role as one of the Tripartite Commission?* Secondly, why did the Foreign Office take a unilateral decision in 1967 to terminate transmissions by the BBC in Albania? If any country is in need of links with the outside world, especially the Western world, it is Albania, which is testified to by those who visit it. It is no wonder Albania considers Britain still to be secretive and perfidious and to be viewed with suspicion.

Incidentally, it is very well worth mentioning that one of the greatest women in the world today is an Albanian, namely Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

MICHAEL LEYLAND NASH.

Norwich City College, Ipswich Road, Norwich, Norfolk.

Paul Celan

Sir,—Remarks both by George Steiner (February 4) and Henry Hellmann (February 18) on the meaning of *Wunderstaude* (*Zeitgehöft*, page 7) have been misleading, to say the least.

Of course Steiner correctly connects *Wunderstaude* with the "burning bush" of the Bible; yet his argument would have been even more convincing had he connected it to *Opferstaude* (*Gedichte II*, 79), and equally had he pointed out that *the "Mosaic rod" of the poem* (*Wunderstaude—Wunderstab!*) is related to the *Jacobsstab* of "Und mit dem Buch aus Tarussa" (I, 289). With Celan, the precise meaning of a word is of paramount importance, as shown by Hans Mayer (*Merkur* 24, 1970, page 1151) in the word *Steinduatel*: "Celan empfahl, statt dem Wort Vorwurf (i.e. the unnecessary invention of words) lieber im Wörterbuch . . . nachzusehen"; Gerhart Baumann (*Etudes Germaniques* 25, 1970, page 386) as regards Celan's unsentimentsche Kenntnis in Botanik und Vogelkunde"—also demonstrated by Paul Requadt (*Bildlichkeit der Dichtung*, 1974, pages 254-6) in the word *Blauspecht* (II, 91) which is *not* a woodpecker but a nuthatch able to run up *and* down trees—and by James K. Lyon (*Collonia Germanica* 1974, pages 298-317) as regards Celan's knowledge of geographical terms.

It is against this background that one discovers—if one takes a closer look at the origin of the aster flower—that it is, indeed, a *Wunderstaude*: for the common *Gartenaster* originated in the Far East, as still conveyed by its botanical name *aster chinensis*.

My main complaint about Steiner's approach towards Celan's poetry concerns sweeping statements like the one (*TLS*, June 25, 1976) to the effect that only Allemann Szondi and Böschenstein have rendered "sharp readings" of some Celan poems, and that the rest is just gossip.

This leads me to suspect that Steiner is not fully conversant with the secondary literature on Celan—for what about Maassen's interpretation of "Tiefimschnee" (*Neophilologus* 56, 1972, pages 188-200), and Perel's of "Frankfurt, September" (*GRM* 23, 1973, pages 56-67)?

Indeed, I would like to warn Professor Steiner not to fall into the same trap as Messrs Bouchet, Davie, and Burgin whose renderings (*Stretto*, 1971) were criticized by Henri Meschonnic ("On appelle cela traduire Celan" in *Pour la Poetique, Volume II, 1973, pages 369-405*) as "massacre de la poésie Celan".

THEUNECKE.

Department of Languages, Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham.

Venice

Sir,—Bruce Boucher (February 18) chides me for attempting to correct a mistake which did not occur in a review by him. Of course it did not. It occurred in the printing of a letter I wrote to you concerning his review. He adds that the name S Nicolò dei Mendicanti, though not incorrect, is the "Italianized" form for S Nicolò dei Mendicoli. This is quite new to me and my use of the name "Mendicanti" in my second letter was due, not to pedantry, but to a slip of my forefingers for which I apologize.

J. G. LINKS.

2 Hyde Park Street, London W2.

Since Khrushchev

Sir,—Two points in Alan Wood's review (February 11) of *The Soviet Union since the Fall of Khrushchev*, edited by Archie Brown and Michael Kaser, call for a reply from the publishers:

1 the pagination is 307, not 249 as stated in the headnote;

2 the implication that the book was slightly outdated is less than fair in that the book was compiled and produced very rapidly and most of the events to which your reviewer refers in his last paragraph took place not only since the book was written, but also since it was published on October 23, 1975. What of course has been long delayed is the appearance of your review.

T. M. FARMILOE.

The Macmillan Press Ltd, 4 Little Essex Street, London WC2.

The last sentence in the first paragraph of Michael Sullivan's review of *Chinoiserie*, by Oliver Impey (*TLS*, March 18) should have read, "... Dr Impey has put together a wealth of material which he handles with great confidence", and not, as appeared by a printing error, "coincidence".

Caleb Williams in Mojaisk

By Michael Agoursky

On June 24, 1974, the eve of President Nixon's arrival in Moscow, I was one of several Jewish activists to be arrested. We were sent to various prisons in the Moscow region. My destination turned out to be Mojaisk, a town approximately 100 kms from Moscow. In the Mojaisk prison I spent some ten days and nights together with two of my comrades.

For the benefit of the inmates, there was a small library in this prison, composed, say, of 600 to 700 volumes, among which, to our surprise, we found authors such as Thomas Mann and Machiavelli—not to mention the Russian classics. One of these books—which for some reason I immediately wanted to borrow—turned out to be the work of the English author William Godwin, *The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (State Publishing House of Literature, 1961). It could be that I chose Godwin because at that time I had been concentrating mainly on English literature, and had no wish to break the pattern of my reading.

I believe that Godwin is a somewhat forgotten writer in his own country, but by a quirk of fate he is sometimes republished in the Soviet Union. The reason for this appears to lie in Godwin's criticism of the England of his day, which—strange as it may seem—is thrust upon the Soviet reader almost as if it were a criticism of contemporary England. One way or another, in 1961 this book reappeared in Moscow.

On my copy of Godwin's book, as on all the other books in the library, was stamped—literally—the following: "Books will cease to be issued should this volume be damaged in any way, or marked on its cover or inside pages by pencils, finger nails, match-sticks, etc."

I immersed myself in *Caleb Williams*, and did not at first notice the scarce-visible vertical pencil lines in the margins, marking certain places in the text. Then I began to study these and soon came to the conclusion that someone had picked out those words which bore relation to his own personal situation at the time. The marked passages were, in the main, not those that dealt with general observations, but rather those that described the real, human plight of *an individual who finds himself the victim of a savage slander*—which, for some personal reason, he finds it difficult to expose.

I looked carefully at every sentence of the pencil. What human tragedy lay behind this? One thing was clear: the nameless reader of *Caleb Williams* was someone sufficiently literate to have been attracted to this book among all those in the prison library. There was no reason to doubt that the majority of the inmates of this place for the detention of criminals would prefer to read trashy Soviet detective stories—that is should they decide to read anything at all. The choice of Godwin as reading matter, and even the very fact that this book did not repel him, by its very first pages but on the contrary caught and held his attention, bear witness to the reader's undeniable spiritual and intellectual development.

I should have liked there and then to copy out the marked passages in the text, but I had no paper. As it happens, at the end of our stay in prison they were kindly issued us with quantities of paper, and as a result I was able to fulfil my ambition and leave, carrying out my notes quite freely. It occurred to me that the curious fate of Godwin's book, landing as it had done in a provincial Soviet jail, and then proceeding to elicit such a deeply felt response from some person unknown, was not without interest. Also, apart from this, I sensed myself to be, for some intangible reason, under a moral obligation to make the secret torment of this nameless prisoner known—be it only to a handful of people. All this led me to bring to the attention of my readers those passages from *Caleb Williams* picked out by the prisoner, with the addition of my own very brief commentary.

Would you lay down this rule for yourself, and suffer no other creature to take the benefit of it? I want nothing of you: how dare you refuse me the privilege of a reasonable being, to live unmolested in poverty and innocence. What sort of a man do you show yourself, you that lay claim to the respect and applause of everyone that knows you?

It would appear that the prisoner was a poor man, without any claim to social status. The choice of this passage indicates at the same time that the chief author of his misfortunes was a man of substance, occupying a relatively high position in society.

I hope there is some law for poor folk, as well as for rich.

The prisoner again numbers himself among the poor.

Being of opinion that law was better adapted for a weapon of tyranny in the hands of the rich, than for a shield to protect the humbler part of the community against their usurpations. In this last instance, however, he conceived that the offence was so atrocious, as to make it impossible that any rank could protect the culprit against the severity of justice.

Here we have an explicit criticism of the society surrounding the prisoner, but at the same time, the hope that the one who is responsible for the present sufferings will not go unpunished.

If I see you pursuing a wrong mode of conduct, it is my business to set you right and save your honour.

An obscure personal allusion. Perhaps the prisoner's feelings towards his persecutor were as ambiguous as those of Caleb Williams himself?

It makes one's heart ache to think that one man is born to the inheritance of every superfluity, while the whole share of another, without any demerit of this, is indigency and starving.

Society casts you out; man abominates you.

This phrase the prisoner manifestly applies to himself, to his own sufferings, as does the hero of the novel.

Tyrrel — the most diabolical wretch that had ever dishonoured human form.

Tyrrel—a character in the novel—is either identified with the prisoner's persecutor, or maybe it just gave him pleasure to mark the place where it says that such monsters do indeed exist.

I make it my boast that I can *endure calamity and pain: shall I not be able to endure the* trifling inconvenience that your folly can inflict upon me?

In one day he was fallen under the most exquisite calamities, a complicated personal insult, and the amputation of the fairest esteem. He might have pled; for no one was forward to proceed against . . . a man so adored as Mr Falkland.

It would seem that even for the Mojaisk prisoner, flight prior to his arrest might have been possible.

O poverty thou art indeed!

Again, his own poverty is underlined.

I could move neither to the right nor the left, but the eye of my keeper was upon me. He watched me: and his vigilance was a sickness to my heart. For me there was no more freedom, no more of hilarity, of thoughtlessness, or of youth.

Anguish at his own imprisonment.

I was a victim at the shrine of undeserved guilt, that knew neither ease nor safety! . . . should be blotted from the catalogue of the living, and my fate remains eternally a secret; the man who added my murder to his former crimes, would show himself the next morning, and be hailed with the admiration and applause of his species.

The prisoner must have been in a state of despair—not knowing whether he would ever succeed in proving his innocence.

I did not here the author of my misfortunes—such and justice acquit me of that.

Another proof of the contradictions in his feelings towards his enemy. Innocence and guilt were, in my apprehension, the things in the whole world the most opposite to each other, or most unlike myself. I believe that the former could be confounded with the latter, unless the innocent man first showed himself to be subdued in mind, before he was delivered of the good opinion of mankind.

. . . and not a little astonished [when it was in my power,—etc] to find the principles of equity so completely reversed, as for the innocent but instructed individual to be the party accused and suffering, instead of having, as was natural, the real criminal at his mercy.

I asked [Mr Forester] were it probable, if I had stolen those things, that I should not have contrived, at least to remove them along with me?

Apparently the prisoner was accused of the same thing, otherwise it is difficult to understand why he should single out this sentence.

There is not a person upon earth less capable than I of the things of which I am accused. I appeal to my heart—I appeal to my looks—I appeal to every sentiment my tongue ever uttered.

For my own part, I had never seen a prison, and, like the majority of my brethren, had given myself little concern to inquire what was the condition of those who committed offence against, or became obnoxious to suspicion from, the community. Oh, how enviable is the most tottering shed under which the labourer retires to rest, compared with the residence of these walls.

But the dirt of a prison speaks madness to the heart, and appears to be already in a state of putridity and infection.

Blessed state of innocence and self-approbation.

I always declared that I was the perpetrator of no guilt, but that the guilt wholly belonged to my accuser. He privately conveyed these effects among my property and then charged me with robbery. I now declare more than that, that this man is a murderer, that I detected his criminality, and that, for that reason, he is determined to deprive me of life. [I presume gentlemen that you do consider it as your business to take this declaration.] I am persuaded you will be by no means disposed actively or passively to contribute to the atrocious injustice under which I suffer, to the imprisonment and condemnation of an innocent man. In order that a murderer may go free. I suppressed this story as long as I could. I was extremely averse to be the author of the unhappiness or the death of a human being. But all patience and submission have their limits.

That this passage should have been singled out strengthens my belief that this unknown prisoner stood accused of stealing goods which had in fact been planted on him. For some reason he did not want to name the true culprit.

There is no hope that remained for me? Was acquittal useless? Was there no method, not in prospect, that could give relief to my sufferings? Was the odious and atrocious falsehood that had been invented against me, to follow me wherever I went, to warp me of character, to deprive me of the sympathy and good will of mankind, to wrest from me the very bread by which life must be sustained?

This final marked passage illustrates the overwhelming despair suffered by the prisoner.

Having read the book, I again examined it in minute detail, and right at the beginning, in one of the left-hand margins, discovered some half-erased words written in the same pencil used to score the text. There were just two words. One of them remained intact. This was the word "Odintsovo"—the name of a small town along the same railway line as Mojaisk, but much nearer to Moscow. It would seem that the unknown prisoner had come from there. The first word was composed of only four letters, and appeared to be a name. As far as I could see, the last letter was an "A". Could the prisoner have been a woman?

Another proof of the contradictions in his feelings towards his enemy. Innocence and guilt were, in my apprehension, the things in the whole world the most opposite to each other, or most unlike myself. I believe that the former could be confounded with the latter, unless the innocent man first showed himself to be subdued in mind, before he was delivered of the good opinion of mankind.

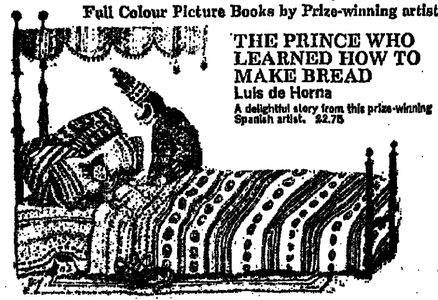
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By A. W. R. Simpson

R. J. SHARPE :
The Law of Habeas Corpus
254pp. Clarendon Press : Oxford University Press. £10.

We are all brought up to believe that the common law, in the writ of habeas corpus, provides a remarkably effective mechanism for the protection of individual liberty, a means whereby any form of detention can be speedily challenged before the courts and, if it proves unlawful, promptly ended. No one who has ever read in the State Trials the account of the case of Wolf Tone, is ever likely to forget the dramatic issue of the writ by the Irish Court of King's Bench when, sentenced to death by a military court for his part in the 1798 rising, he was being led to the scaffold. "Let a writ instantly be prepared", ordered the Court, and Wolf Tone was saved in the nick of time by the resolute action of the judiciary. Unhappily, and with little regard for the importance of the point of law involved, he died by his own hand before the legality of his sentence could be determined by the Court. Yet in spite of its significance in the folklore of the English constitution there has been little in the way of a literature on the subject of habeas corpus and this is the first comprehensive study of the modern law and practice surrounding the writ.

At a time when there is much discussion of the need for a new Bill of Rights the publication of R. J. Sharpe's careful and scholarly monograph is particularly opportune. Essentially, habeas corpus is a *procedure*, potentially capable of extension so as to cover all forms of detention and subject them to review by the judiciary, which has, in the present conditions in this country, nothing to fear whatever decision is given. But around this procedure there has developed a complex, disorderly, and in some ways depressing body of legal doctrine which defines and delimits the scope of the review power and the way in which it may be exercised. It is with this technical law that Dr Sharpe is primarily concerned, and although from time to time he lets slip some observations about the way in which the law works in practice he concentrates on abstract matters of law.

He shows how habeas corpus can be a highly effective mechanism; for example, he instances the decision in the *Rutty* case in 1956 which led to the release of over 3,000 people from improper committal to institutions under the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913. Its effectiveness is, however, limited by certain practical considerations; for example, persons detained by the police may be left uncertain as to whether they are arrested or not, and may be impeded or find difficulty in obtaining legal advice so that their right to use the writ becomes a dead letter. But leaving aside such practicalities, which are not really dealt with in this book, the effectiveness of habeas corpus is restricted by two major factors.

The first is that evil and pernicious doctrine, the sovereignty of parliament, under which civil liberties are placed at the risk of abolition by the elected dictatorship. In reality this may place such liberties at the mercy of the higher Civil Service, which has not got an unblemished record in this area. The second factor, which is more difficult to assess, is a certain lack of enthusiasm among members of the higher judiciary for the protection of civil rights. It is unhappily the case that their batting record in recent times has been less than inspiring. The *Mughal* case in 1973 is only one example. There the applicant was a Pakistani who had lived in England for some time and who went abroad for a holiday. On his return he was refused admission by an immigration officer and kept in custody. He wished by the use of the writ to challenge the legality of the action of the immigration officer in refusing him re-entry to the country. The Lord Chief Justice approached the matter in the following way: "this man is in custody not because he was totally denied his freedom, but because he chose to remain in custody while the matter was being determined, rather than go back to Pakistan, as he could have done the day he arrived." This may be called the "Alice in custody" approach to civil liberties.

This is only one in a line of decisions going back to the well-known *Liversidge v Anderson* decision on 18b in wartime in which the courts appear to have shown a lack of vigour in the protection of civil liberty. The essential problem perhaps is that it is by no means clear that all judges have really grasped the notion of a civil right as something citizens possess even if its existence represents a pestilential nuisance to those in authority; that is to say that arguments ultimately based on convenience do not count against such rights at all. Many now argue that a minimal list of civil rights should be entrenched and left to protection by the independent judiciary, and the present study is of considerable importance to the debate on the practicality of such a course. The law of habeas corpus is to a very considerable extent judge-made law, and the record of the courts in handling such proceedings is highly relevant to any assessment of how they would be likely to behave if presented with a new Bill of Rights. Dr Sharpe's book appears at the right moment.

Inquiring into inquests

By Graham Zellick

GAVIN THURSTON :
Coronership
254pp. Barry Rose. £16.

Towards the end of last year, the body of a distinguished television executive was found on the pavement below his flat in Westminster. His "suicide", as the world immediately assumed, made the front pages, while on the inside pages friends and colleagues unfolded the private misery and loneliness which led to this desperate act. But within a few weeks, Her Majesty's Coroner for Inner West London, Dr Gavin Thurston, recorded a finding of accidental death, there being not a shred of evidence to support the suggestion of suicide. So the public record is straight and all doubt is officially removed. The coroner's inquest, unique in English law in its inquisitorial procedure, has arrived at the truth. Likewise, the verdict of justifiable homicide at the slightly earlier inquest into the death of Liddle Towers, resulting from injuries sustained while being arrested on a trivial charge, formally vindicates the police and restores confidence in their actions.

Whenever death occurs in a disaster or accident, public attention is focused on the event, the causes isolated, anyone responsible identified, and the chances of any repetition reduced. If there is cause to suspect that, in the words of the Coroners Act 1887, a "person has died either a violent or an unnatural death, or has died a sudden death of which the cause is unknown", the coroner must hold an inquest. The theory is splendid, but how successful the system is, is another question. Some argue that the coroner's inquest is mischievous, purporting to uncover the truth when often it is an ineffective instrument for doing so. Others are content to claim merely that the inquest is unnecessary and useless. But with questions of this kind, Gavin Thurston, Inner West London Coroner, deputy coroner to the Royal Household and sometime president of the Coroners' Society, is unconcerned.

There is a brief history of the coroner; and a tacit recognition of his value runs thoughout the book, but this is no critical evaluation of the system of coroners' courts. It purports to be no more than "a practical reference to law and practice" and its 168 pages of text provide a brief, lucid and accurate guide to the subject, which will doubtless prove a *vade mecum* for all coroners and a useful starting point for lawyers and others faced with an inquest. The remainder of *Coronership* is taken up by the statutes, rules and forms, usefully assembled in an appendix, which should have made unnecessary the extensive quotation of statutory provisions in the text itself. There is wisely no attempt to tackle the complex legal problems which may arise in connection with death, though their existence is often noticed and the reader is alerted to a possible difficulty, but one or two ventures into legal explanation —such as the rationale behind sovereign immunity and the immunity conferred on visiting forces—fall into error.

The author does, however, include a certain amount of substantive forensic medicine (no doubt useful, especially to the majority of coroners who are not medically qualified), and the major recommendations for reform are mentioned.

The present governing statute was passed in 1887. In *Law Reform Now* in 1963, Mr Gerald Gardiner, QC, and Mr F. Elwyn Jones, QC, discussing the administration of justice, listed the defects in the working of coroners' courts, noted their absence from Scotland (where, however, the procurator fiscal has some responsibilities in this area) and concluded that they should be abolished. By 1964, Lord Gardiner had become Lord Chancellor and Sir Elwyn Jones Attorney General, and early the following year the Home Secretary appointed a committee on death certification and coroners under Judge Brodrick which reported six years later, suggesting a large number of valuable improvements, currently being further considered by a Home Office working party. Two of these recommendations, however, have been included in the Criminal Law Bill now before Parliament. If passed, a coroner's inquisition would no longer be able to name someone as guilty of murder, manslaughter or infanticide (with the result that he is automatically committed for trial in the Crown Court); and the coroner would be relieved of the obligation to summon a jury in those cases where it is now mandatory for him to do so. Why the uncontroversial Brodrick reforms have been so long delayed is unclear, but one advantage of their implementation would be a reduction of something like two thirds in the number of inquests held.

So long as coroners survive, Dr Thurston's modest but useful book will have its readers among the few hundred coroners and their deputies who alone will be minded to pay a price of this kind. The Brodrick report, at one seventh of the cost, remains a better buy.

The place of the female factor

By Laurie Taylor

CAROL SMART :
Women, Crime and Criminology
A Feminist Critique
208pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £4.95.

Social scientists intent on packing most of humankind within their conceptual vehicles have frequently been confounded by the special claims of excluded groups. In recent years the problem has grown. Sociologists working in such fields as medicine, law and industry have been forcefully asked to make room in their schemes for the other half of the world—women.

Now it's the criminologists' turn. No sooner have they finished widening their terms of reference to include the crimes of the powerful and the politically motivated, than Carol Smart claims they have either ignored female criminality altogether or forced it into a special, and totally inadequate, explanatory framework. Her comprehensive bibliography supports the first charge (only half a dozen major texts devoted to the subject in the past fifty years) and the main part of her text is devoted to establishing the second.

She starts with some classical studies, Cesare Lombroso, W. I. Thomas and Otto Pollak. Not too stimulating an enterprise on the face of it; we are all pretty tired of authors who put the "founding fathers" in their place before producing shining new theories of their own. And Lombroso, Thomas and Pollak look easier targets than most; a few quick bursts of "what about social structure and culture?" should be enough to flatten their explanatory pretensions. But Ms Smart has more excuse than others for this familiar ploy, for, as she shows in her later chapters, it is the classical conception of female criminality—the biologically based model resting upon a confusion between sex and gender—which still influences contemporary thought. While male criminals get the full treatment laid upon them by modern criminologists — subcultural influences and labelling processes, cultural motives and attributions of purpose—female criminals are still allowed little more than a meagre bio-psychological handout of "special needs" and "emotional maladjustment".

When cultural considerations do appear they still stick close to traditional models—to a version of sex-appropriate behaviour. This is the case, for example, when the women's movement is cited as a possible cause of the increase in female crime in recent years. One typical writer, quoted by Ms Smart, talks of "the seeking by the girl for equality with the man, in every way including violence. . . No longer can you appeal to girls, as in the past, on grounds of femininity, of being feminine — that has no meaning at all." The traditionalism of this argument lies in its assumption that violence is somehow intrinsically "masculine" behaviour, rather than a way of behaving which may be adopted by either sex in particular circumstances. It is hardly likely, as Ms Smart observes, that delinquent girls and criminal women are strong supporters of the women's movement; they may however be responding to the same type of restrictions upon feminine activity which has prompted political activity in other sections of society. It is not therefore a case of women becoming like men, but of women using some of the resources which have traditionally (at least in our society) been monopolized by men for the expression of frustration and the assertion of power.

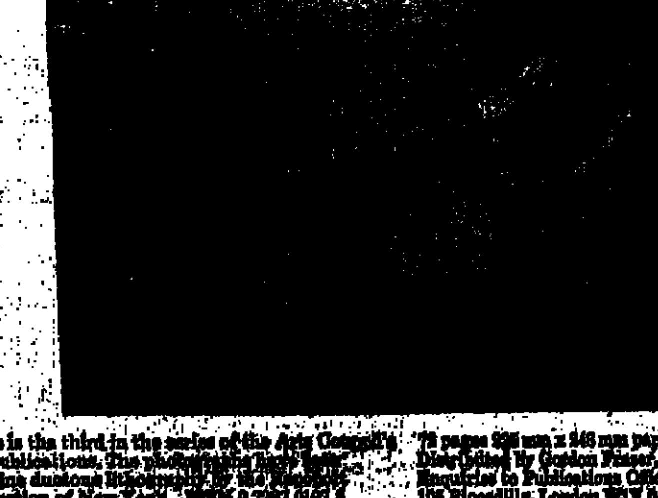
After her round-up of general theories, Ms Smart becomes more specific. There are chapters on rape and prostitution, on mental illness and women, and the institutional treatment of female offenders (the role of housekeeping lessons in turning delinquents back into "normal" girls). All of these [illegible] her systematic analysis of bias; [illegible] of them establish the existence of a double standard based upon unexamined ideas about the real nature of women.

This is a very thorough piece of work, subtle, well argued and closely integrated. The only major fault is the author's relative failure to explain her own theory of crime and criminal activity. Her version of feminism is evident enough and informs much of the argument; it is also clear that she has little time for positivists, determinists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, role theorists, and the other ritual bogymen of contemporary criminology texts; but we learn little of the type of theorist or practitioner who is to replace them. There are a few radical clichés dotted around the text; treatment as a form of social control, crime as a product of the economic and social structure of society, delinquency as a meaningful response to repressive circumstances; these really have no more impact than a set of lapel badges. They are assertions rather than arguments and tell us little about any action which might be taken in regard to crime, criminals or penal institutions, whether male or female. Perhaps Ms Smart has another book in mind. It should be worth waiting for.

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The contradictions of serfdom

By William Letwin

GUY FOURQUIN :
Lordship and Feudalism in the Middle Ages
Translated by Iris and A. L. Lytton Sells
253pp. Allen and Unwin. £6.50.

RODNEY HILTON (Editor) :
The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism
195pp. New Left Books. £4.75.

EUGENE KAMENKA and R. S. NEALE (Editors) :
Feudalism, Capitalism and Beyond
147pp. Edward Arnold. £3.95 (paperback, £1.95).

JEAN BAECHLER :
The Origins of Capitalism
Translated by Barry Cooper
116pp. Oxford : Blackwell. £4.75.

How did feudalism turn into capitalism? Historians and readers of history who like sweeping vistas, who long to trace the majestic progress of humanity, delight in such a question. Even more do those who believe that if they can understand properly how feudalism turned into capitalism, they can know more surely how and why and when capitalism must turn itself into socialism. Such curiosity may seem innocent or even worthy; but the question of how feudalism gave way to capitalism is neither simple nor neutral.

A difficulty at the outset is to decide what feudalism means. According to Guy Fourquin and others, it is a name that should be reserved exclusively for the network of relations between lords and vassals, one but only one prominent characteristic of medieval Europe. Lord and vassal were linked by a personal bond; reciprocal loyalty required each to protect the other, with force of arms if need be. In order that the vassal could carry out his side of the bargain, the lord typically gave him a block of land, known as a fief, *feodum*, or *feudum*—from which latter the term feudalism was concocted, long after the event.

In Professor Fourquin's view, widely shared in outline though not in detail, feudalism thus names the relations among a group of military men who were also in some degree rulers. This view is well illustrated by G. B. Adams, an American medievalist of the last century, who described feudalism as "a crude and barbarous form of government", whereby "the public duties and obligations which ordinarily the citizen owes the state, are turned into private and personal services which he owes to his lord"—though it is anachronistic to import the concepts of "citizen" and "state" into the Middle Ages and not a little arbitrary to regard "the state" (rather than, for instance, other human beings) as the natural claimant of public duties.

Feudalism achieved its neatest form, according to Fourquin in *Lordship and Feudalism in the Middle Ages*, during its "classical ages", from about 1100 to 1300. Then was perfected what he calls "the feudal pyramid", at its apex the king (occupying this station in his capacity as chief lord rather than king), next below a few magnates, and so on down to the least knights. After about 1300, according to Fourquin, feudalism began to dissolve, because lords could no longer choose their vassals, the right to the *feudum* or fief having slowly become hereditary and alienable.

While feudalism died, the related but distinct phenomenon of lordship persisted, according to Fourquin. Lordship or seigneurage is the name given to the relations between rural lords and their peasants, relations which it has been fashionable among English historians to consider under the heading of the manorial system. The manor, the estate of a lord, yielded him an income in a variety of ways. One large part of it, the demesne, was cultivated directly for his benefit by his peasants, some doing this work to fulfil fixed obligations and [illegible] doing it for hire. The rest of the arable land of the manor, typically half or more, was let to the peasants. The peasant paid rent, in cash or kind, and rendered labour services in varying amounts (according as he was free or servile, or had bought his way out of such obligations), and made special payments when the use of land was transferred by inheritance or sale. Pasturage, woods, and waste of the manor were exploited either for the lord's direct benefit or for the benefit of peasants, who had to pay the lord accordingly. In some such setting was agriculture conducted during the high Middle Ages and, as Fourquin points out, long after the demise of feudalism; indeed lordship continued in England until the Restoration, in France until the Revolution, and in Eastern Europe later still.

This relation of landlord to peasant is distinguished by Fourquin from another, "bannal lordship", in which the lord stood as ruler to his dependants. In this aspect the lord imposed certain obligations — such as to use "only his oven and mill and wine-press, and pay for it" — and certain payments, arbitrary in amount, which can be construed as taxes, and fines for neglecting those obligations and payments, which fines were imposed by the lord's own court. According to Fourquin, it is certain that on the Continent, from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, the income that the lord received in his aspect as ruler "constituted a burden 'incomparably heavier'" than the rents, labour services, and fees that he collected in his aspect as landlord. Though the "bannal" power of lords waned as that of princes and kings grew, lordship in both aspects survived well beyond feudalism and indeed until quite recently.

Fourquin's book is in large measure a compilation of the views of a distinguished school of French and Belgian medievalists — Bloch, Ganshof, Duby, Perroy, Perrin, Genicot and others. As such it is a useful introduction to an extensive literature much of which is not available in English, and would have been more useful had Fourquin supplied citations to his sources. The general structure of the book is clear, but the argument in detail is often vague and repetitious; and because Fourquin aims to cover the whole of Western Europe across six centuries, when conditions varied widely according to time and place, he is forced constantly to qualify and requalify any broad statement. Where the terrain is so broken, an outline map is more than usually misleading.

* * *

Feudalism means something quite different to Marxist historians. They identify it as a "social order", and following Marx's tenet, that the political and intellectual aspects of life in any social order are dictated by its economic system, they characterize feudalism in terms of its "mode of production". The core of this they call "serfdom", by which Marxists, according to Rodney Hilton, editor of *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, mean "the exploitative relationship between landowners and subordinated peasants, in which the surplus beyond subsistence of the latter, whether in direct labour or in rent in kind or in money, is transferred under coercive sanction to the former".

Although debating definitions is not generally a useful path to the truth, it is worth noting the vagueness in the key term of this definition. "Under feudalism," says Professor Hilton, "the landowner seized from the peasant all his product except what was barely sufficient for the peasant's 'subsistence'." But how much is that? A larger daily ration is needed to keep a person alive until fifty than until forty or twenty. Staying alive is one thing, working hard is another. Besides, the subsistence income for a family depends on the number and ages of its members. So "the subsistence level" is not a precise amount but any amount within a very wide range. In other words, if the feudal lord, as we are told, aimed to take from peasants any surplus beyond subsistence, he must have been sorely puzzled about exactly how much to take.

The lord could have made a brutal test of "subsistence". He might have allowed his peasants some income chosen at random and watched the long-run outcome. Had the number of peasants waned from one generation to another, he might infer that he had been underfeeding them; had their number increased, he must have been overfeeding them. Of course, to the extent that he made his own living by exploiting peasants, he might quite like to see their number increase. He might accordingly have overfed them, as one might feed cows liberally in order to increase the size of the herd. In short, a perfect exploiter trying to maximize his income over more than a brief moment would allow his victims an income well above subsistence. But this, of course, is purely hypothetical reasoning.

Turning to the historical facts, Marxist and non-Marxist historians alike agree that the population of England and Western Europe doubled or tripled between about 1100 and 1348. Although some historians have questioned the absolute numbers estimated by the leading authority, J. C. Russell, nobody doubts that the number of people in Europe, most of them peasants, increased greatly throughout three centuries. Of course, a population might grow because of improvements in sanitary and medical services or because of changes in habits concerning pregnancy and birth; but there is no sign of such changes in medieval Europe. The most plausible explanation is that during this period peasants, on the average, enjoyed incomes well above the subsistence level, and so were able to more than reproduce their number from one generation to the next.

Plenty of other evidence is available to the same effect. Although it cannot tell us how many peasants lived at a higher standard or how much higher, it shows that landowners did not succeed in holding peasants down to the bare minimum of income, and it raises the question whether landowners even tried. For instance many peasants bought their way out of compulsory labour services; they paid the lord for such remissions out of savings; but how could they have accumulated savings if their incomes had been at subsistence level? When a peasant died, his heirs had to pay the lord a fee, the "heriot"; this inheritance tax, as one might describe it, was paid either in the form of cattle or money; and as heirs were able to make such payments without starving to death as a result, the payments must have come from savings, and they from income surplus to "subsistence". Moreover, there is much stronger witness still, in the shape of peasants who amassed such substantial reserves that they were able to rent increasingly large plots of land from their lords, including in some instances the whole of the lord's demesne.

Some evidence, which looks as though it supports the subsistence hypothesis, looks that way only because it has been misinterpreted. From the records of five manors belonging to the bishops of Winchester, M. M. Postan and J. Z. Titow extracted statistics on the prices of wheat and the number of heriot payments between 1245 and 1350. Noting that these statistics rose and fell in step with each other, they concluded in a famous article that "the sharp response of mortalities to crop failures undoubtedly reflected the high and rising number of tenants whose holdings were too small to enable them to sustain themselves in [illegible] bad harvest". The authors are not Marxist, and this particular finding fits more comfortably with Professor Postan's theory that England had become overpopulated by about 1350 than with a Marxist view that peasants lived at subsistence *throughout* the feudal period; nevertheless the finding in itself might be thought to bolster the theory of the peasant restricted to subsistence.

But there are many reasons why the Winchester evidence need not be interpreted this way. It is not [illegible] the case that every heriot payment meant that a peasant had died shortly before, nor that wheat was prominent in the diet of peasants—which raises questions about how accurately the Winchester numbers represent death on the one hand and starvation on the other. Neither is it the case that the number of deaths on the five manors [illegible] with high wheat prices. Yet setting these problems aside as though they were minor, there is quite another reason for radically questioning the conclusion reached by Postan and Titow. They say that peasants "undoubtedly" died because of crop failures; in fact their evidence can just as plausibly bear two other interpretations. It may be that human beings died and the wheat crop failed for the same reason; extremes of weather are bad for plants and people alike. It may be, alternatively, that crop failures were the effect rather than cause of human deaths; for if an epidemic killed many peasants, then the amount of wheat grown by peasants would fall too, especially in a very labour-intensive economy. In short, the correlation observed by Postan and Titow does not dictate the conclusion they reached; the evidence might mean what they say, or might mean the opposite. In any event, even if one took the conclusions of Postan and Titow at face value, they would only prove that *some* peasants lived near the margin of subsistence. This could hardly be contested. In every poor society, some people are perilously poor; but most members of even a poor society may live well above the "subsistence" level.

The economic after-effects of the Black Death have also been misinterpreted as evidence of exploitation. In 1349 about one third of the English died of bubonic plague; subsequent outbreaks reduced the population of England by 1400 to about half of what it had been in 1348. It appears that between about 1345 and 1375, the incomes of certain large landowners fell by about 10 per cent. Landlords' incomes falling by only 10 per cent, while the number of serfs fell by over 30 per cent, smacks to Rodney Hilton of "a general intensification of exploitation". Now this is curious, because three pages later in the same study (*The Decline of Serfdom in Medieval England*, 1969), Hilton presents figures showing that during the same interval (from the 1340s to the 1370s) the wage rate of agricultural labourers rose by 7 per cent in real terms and 28 per cent in nominal terms. Certainly this shows the opposite of "intensified exploitation". How is this mystery, which Hilton appears to have overlooked, to be resolved? Is it reasonable to suppose that after one third of all peasants died, landlords had to raise the average wage rate to get enough work done? Certainly this would be the natural outcome in a competitive market. And the fact that this did happen, coupled with the fact that wage rates for serfs fluctuated quickly and unpredictably throughout the fourteenth century, strongly suggests that the labour market was in some substantial measure competitive. Although wage rates were no doubt tempered by custom and sometimes distorted by oppression, yet the sharp rise in wage rates after 1349 proves that the serf was more nearly like a free labourer, accepting or declining a job according to the wage offered, than an exploited captive, constantly held down to bare subsistence. Is it reasonable, further, to suppose that under such conditions landowners' incomes might fall by only 10 per cent when the labour force declined by 33 per cent? It is perfectly reasonable. Indeed, assuming a Cobb-Douglas production function and any plausible figure for the marginal productivity of labour in medieval agriculture, and given the usual estimate that grain prices rose by about 20 per cent, any result other than a decline of about 10 per cent in landowners' incomes would be unlikely.

All this poses a certain difficulty for Marxist historians. Since lords were demonstrably *not* seizing all the surplus output of the peasants, the whole idea of "exploitation" becomes shaky—for it would be a strange sort of robber who, having at his mercy a victim possessed of £50, took only £5 or £10. So the Marxist historian ought either to abandon the Marxist definition of feudalism as "a system of exploitation" or concede that feudalism—as he defines it—did not exist in Europe during the Middle Ages. Might it not make better sense to regard the manorial system as a form of government, the lord performing public services and taxing the serfs accordingly? It was not the most just or attractive system of government, but more nearly that

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—so the facts suggest—than a system of mere exploitation.

* * *

Capitalism, the *presumed* successor to feudalism, is for Marxists a mode of production characterized by "wage-labour": the worker, who possesses nothing but his labour, sells it to a capitalist, who pays less than it is worth and pockets the difference. Accordingly the transition from feudalism to capitalism, in Marxist terms, was fundamentally a transition from serfs to wage-labourers. Why did feudal lords—to whom Marxists impute the power and will implicit in the phrase "ruling class"—allow such a thing to happen? Maurice Dobb, in his *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (1946), explained the end of feudalism as resulting from "over-exploitation" of serfs by their masters. Lords, never attentive to the welfare of serfs, continually engaged in destructive warfare, became at last extravagant and luxury-loving; their increasing need for income led them to intensify their demands on serfs; and serfs eventually deserted the manors, whereupon feudalism weakened and died. Dobb's explanation was challenged in 1950 by another Marxist economist, Paul Sweezy, and contributions to the ensuing debate have been gathered in the volume edited by Professor Hilton.

For Sweezy the key to understanding the transition is to recognize that feudalism was a system of production for use and capitalism of production for exchange. Such trade as took place within feudalism was peripheral, whereas for capitalism trade is of the essence. Therefore it was the growth of trade, and the concurrent growth of towns, which Sweezy (like many non-Marxist historians, notably Pirenne, on whose work Sweezy rested much of his case) identified as the "root cause of the decline of feudalism". If not for the growth of trade, feudal lords would not have become extravagant; because, according to Sweezy, it is the seller rather than the buyer who initiates changes in taste. If not for the growth of towns, serfs could not have fled from their manors, because there would have been no other refuge. And it was because so many serfs had fled that lords were forced to make concessions to keep the remaining serfs in place, concessions which elevated serfs into free peasant proprietors. Therefore, contrary to Dobb, Sweezy maintained that feudalism broke down because of "the inability of the ruling class to maintain control over, and hence to overexploit society's labour power".

The breakdown of feudalism, according to Sweezy, did not make way at once for the triumphant entry of capitalism. There was a gap of about two centuries, roughly 1350 to 1550, during which neither feudalism nor capitalism prevailed nor any mixture of the two. The economic system that did prevail during this interval Sweezy labelled "the system of pre-capitalist commodity production", though he allowed that this was not quite a "social system" and thus not on a par in the Marxist lexicon with feudalism and capitalism. It was during this interval that the class structure of capitalism came into being. Some people got hold of assets and proceeded to devote them to industry; others were dispossessed and became the "class willing to work for wages". And so, after about 1550, in Western Europe and especially Britain, the capitalist and proletariat having formed, capitalism at last began.

Dobb replied. Sweezy had argued that feudalism was destroyed from without, by the growth of trade and towns—contrary to Dobb's view that it was destroyed from within. Dobb now dismissed Sweezy's analysis as "external" and "static". "It would make feudalism" (an exception to the general Marxist law of development that economic society is moved by its own internal contradictions". Further, as to Sweezy's new transitional epoch, Dobb held that though it might be acceptable within "a purely evolutionary view of historical development" it could not fit within a Marxist view, "a revolutionary view of historical development . . . with social revolution (in the sense of the transfer of power from one class to another) as the crucial mechanism of historical transformation". Sweezy's intermediate stage could not fit because it lacked a distinctive ruling class, and therefore had not been brought into being by a social revolution. Dobb reiterated the orthodox conclusion that until capitalism took over during the seventeenth century, the ruling class continued to be feudal.

Responding to Dobb's rebuttal, Sweezy said among other things that there was no difficulty in discerning who ruled during his transitional phase. There must have been *several* ruling classes, whose conflicting interests were balanced by the state. To which suggestion Christopher Hill subsequently answered that it is logically absurd to posit several ruling classes, since in order to rule, a class must possess the power of the state, which it would not share with any other class.

Hilton, in his own entry, took up Sweezy's proposition that feudalism was destroyed from without, by the intrusion of commerce. A Marxist, said Hilton, must find the source of revolution in "internal contradictions"—and he located this, as Dobb had, in the landowners' exaction of feudal rents, which antagonized the serfs "and in the fourteenth century reaches the acute stage of revolt". Sweezy's suggestion of an external cause Hilton labelled as "non-Marxist".

A non-Marxist spectator might imagine that the questions of internal versus external causes of change, and of revolutionary versus revolutionary modes of change represent merely minor doctrinal discords. Nothing is further from the truth. The theoretical integrity of the Marxist view depends on the idea of absolute inevitability, the implacable march from primitive communism through the Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and capitalist modes of production to the triumphant final stage of socialism. Any suggestion that external circumstances might fundamentally alter the progression would make chance a vital factor in history, would undermine inevitability, and would imply the unthinkable possibility that socialism could be avoided or undone if, for any reason, circumstances altered or even if enough people were to conclude that they did not enjoy the prospect. It would, as Procacci said, pose the historical problem "in terms of random contingency". In short, Sweezy was accused of fomenting a heresy; his interpretation would make it appear that history is the record not of a pre determined and inevitable progress of the race but rather of the unpredictable interplay of individuals exercising choice.

Taken all in all, *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* shows a doctrinal community at work, exploring the inner recesses, filling in the gaps and patching up the cracks in what they believe to be a truth, if not quite the whole and perfect truth yet the single great truth about the whole.

* * *

A wider, and for that reason more imaginative and illuminating exploration of capitalism is contained in *Feudalism, Capitalism and Beyond*, a collection of articles edited by Eugene Kamenka and R. S. Neale, which emerges from a series of seminars at the Australian National University. Marx is present in the minds of all the contributors and is welcomed as a mentor by some, but none of them assumes the role of glossator on a sacred text.

Two contributors contest the Marxist scheme of historical inevitability by arguing that capitalism was developing slowly and continuously throughout the feudal period and that feudalism persisted into the capitalist period. Both propositions, if proven, would refute the Marxist view that the transition was of a revolutionary character, one order giving of its internal contradictions, the next being born of seeds contained in the earlier, the death of the first necessarily preceding the birth of the next, and the transition being marked by cataclysm as the new ruling class dislodges the old.

The view that capitalism grew up within the feudal period is presented by H. E. Hallam, who argues that the seeds of the future were not to be found, as many believe, among merchants and townsmen but rather inside the Church and particularly within the Benedictine monasteries. Weber had suggested that "the monk is the first human being who lives rationally" during the Middle Ages; Professor Hallam, without drawing on Weber, maintains that monastic discipline was the beginning of much more than its founder intended. St Benedict ordained that monks should follow a life of regularity, discipline and hard work—for the greater glory of God. Accordingly, says Hallam, monks took to clocks, exact account-keeping, and well-ordered administration—the basic technology of modern business. Moreover, as they flourished they accumulated liquid capital, which they systematically invested in improvements to their estates. Laymen, high and low, observing their success, imitated their methods. So what originated as rules of religion shaped the attitudes which laymen carried into the secular realm.

A converse view, that "feudal" ideas persisted into the capitalist epoch, is put forward by G. C. Pocock. He finds that about 1700 —at which time capitalism was, by Marxist reckoning, well entrenched—the British believed that the only sound basis of civic virtue was landed property. Moreover they regarded as tolerable, though politically less stable than landowners. And "the 'monied interest' properly defined"—"soldiers, placemen, rentiers, stockjobbers and parliamentary oligarchs"—they regarded as the sources of vice, created by corrupt government, which they corrupted further. If, as Marx held, men's ideas simply reflect the underlying economic conditions of their time, then it is strange that in capitalist Europe the hereditary ownership of land should so long have been regarded as more respectable than new fortunes accumulated by "capitalists" through financial speculation, manufacture, or even honest commerce. It would be puzzling to an economic determinist if a few men held beliefs out of keeping with the economic circumstances of their lives (and within Marxist ideology, Marx himself presents such a puzzle); but it would be threatening indeed to the Marxist position if, as Professor Pocock argues, the general drift of ideas and beliefs in a capitalist order were profoundly "anti-capitalist".

* * *

Three other contributors to this collection focus their attention on law and especially the law of property. Professor Neale maintains that landowners and aristocrats did more than Marx acknowledged to bring in capitalism, particularly by making land law more flexible, a more suitable instrument for financial manipulation and capitalist development. C. B. Macpherson examines changes in the concept of property associated with the origins of capitalism and still other changes necessitated by the maturing of capitalism. He concludes, above all, that property "needs to become a right to participate in a system of power relations which will enable the individual to live a fully human life", but doubts whether that change can come about smoothly within a capitalist order and yet doubts also whether it will require "traumatic revolutionary action". Finally, Professor Kamenka and Professor Tay maintain that, in socialist and capitalist countries alike, law has not yet adjusted to the bureaucratic and administrative facts of the modern state—or, as some legal theorists would put it, that public law has not yet entirely displaced private law.

* * *

Marx's views serve as the springboard from which Jean Baechler launches his own probing into the origins of capitalism. In *The German Ideology*, as M Baechler interprets it, Marx and Engels argued that capitalism matured in measure as markets expanded from closed village economies to a world economy. Baechler rejects this as tautological: once Marx and Engels had defined capitalism in terms of the extension of markets, they could encounter no difficulty in explaining it in those terms, as the explanation was implicit in the definition. Besides, it does not explain why markets did expand, nor why in other places or at other times the extension of markets failed to bring about capitalism.

Turning to *Capital*, Baechler finds a similar difficulty. There Marx analyzed capitalism in terms of three essential components. The worker must be deprived of land and tools so that he can survive only by selling his labour; he must be liberated from the servile obligations to a feudal lord so that he is free to sell his labour; and a capitalist must be on hand, able and willing to pay wages. But how, asks Baechler, did this necessary conjunction come about? It might have happened by chance, but that would have been highly improbable, says Baechler—and it might be added that to attribute anything fundamental to chance would be, totally alien to Marx's view of history. Or else the three conditions were necessarily interdependent, in which case no one of them could have preceded the others, have been the historical cause of the others, which means that all three together must have been caused by something else; and if so, then Marx has not explained how it happened.

In these and similar ways, Baechler rejects Marx's theory as inescapably circular, because Marx had to posit the existence of capitalism as a first step toward explaining its origins. This point, which Baechler makes rather cryptically, might be put in another way. It is impossible for anybody today to *prove* (as predict with certainty) how the human race will evolve during the next thousand years, though at the end of that time, when biologists can see just how it has evolved, they might be able to explain why it had evolved that way. Suppose, however, that they fell into the temptation to say that the observed evolution of the eye had been inevitable, they would then have to meet the objection that if the event appears inevitable when seen from its end it should in principle have been predictable when seen from its beginning, to the extent that historians presume explanations ascribing inevitability to observed events, they open themselves to the paradox which Baechler identifies in Marx.

After this review of Marx, Baechler turns to his own explanation of how capitalism originated. By way of introduction he endorses Weber's view that capitalism expresses the distinctive character of Western civilization, "the rationalization of human activities". He defines capitalism as an economic system radically different from all others in its devotion to efficiency. "Capitalism is the state the economy must attain when nothing arises to hinder its law, that is the law of efficiency." This implies for him that in an ideally capitalist economy every producer would aim, for nothing but the maximum profits, all intellectual activity would be devoted to the lowering of costs, all labourers would work as hard as is compatible with their security, all goods would be consumed as soon as they were produced, no limitations would be imposed on these efficient drives by any source, cultural, moral, intellectual, political, or social.

Having gone this far, Baechler has virtually disclosed the shape of his own explanation for the historical origins of capitalism. Since capitalism is the way an economy works when no barriers stand in the way of efficiency, the history of its origin is a history of how various barriers fell or failed. The greatest barriers, Baechler says, were those imposed by governments; and Europe after the fall of Rome was blessed with weak government: it was, according to Baechler, "a society based upon the same moral and material civilization that never ended up in political unity", remaining always politically decentralized and to that extent politically weak. Other barriers—arising from religious, military and bureaucratic values—fell as those values waned after the eleventh century. And so capitalism came into being in the West, fundamentally because the innate tendency of men inclined it would always lead that way if not repressed; and it failed to appear elsewhere in the world because there it was successfully repressed.

It will be readily recognized that Baechler's book, which he properly describes as an essay, lacks nothing in boldness. Unfortunately its loose construction, appropriate as it is to the form, occasionally degenerates into undue looseness and imprecision. His comments on the methodological issues in trying to give a historical account of "origins" are valuable though regrettably elliptical. Despite these shortcomings, in *The Origins of Capitalism* Baechler has made an original and stimulating addition to the literature on capitalism.

* * *

Many of the difficulties encountered in all these works arise from the nature of the question, how did feudalism change into capitalism? It invites us to view the history of some billions of people during a thousand years as though it could reasonably be condensed into a single broad "movement", one great "transformation".

Even if one arbitrarily restricted the inquiry to economics, the history of Europe between 900 and 1900 is a record of myriad changes rather than of any single change. At the beginning a peasant grew crops on a number of dispersed narrow strips in the common fields; by the end grain was typically grown in enclosed fields that might be a hundred times larger than a strip. At the beginning agriculture was done largely by hand; at the end it was done with heavy equipment. Improved and richly fertilized land, plants and animals transformed by selective breeding, and above all by workers and managers whose efforts were made vastly more efficient by education. At the beginning manufactured goods were produced largely by hand, at the end by machinery; and the larger production of workers and capital came off the fields into the factories. Any competent economic historian could go on for a long time enumerating equally broad changes in the way people earned their livings. But there is no solid way to determine objectively which of those changes were more important than others—and indeed it makes no sense to ask the question. Nor is there any special reason why all these various changes should be lumped together in two boxes labelled feudalism and capitalism. Putting such labels on a long and complex history disguises and conceals what was really happening.

Even when a historian tries to describe fairly simple historical changes as neutrally as possible, the very terms of the description are apt to create misleading impressions. For instance, it is frequently asserted that during the fifteenth century "smallholders disappeared". What is this supposed to mean? The data are found when one compares the records of a given manor for say 1400 with those for 1430 and discovers that the number of peasants holding plots of less than say five acres has decreased over the interval. Those are the data. But what do they mean? Possibly that some peasants who held small plots in 1400 left the manor for towns, or abandoned the plots as worthless or died. Possibly they mean that some peasants who held small plots in 1400 accumulated more land, so that by 1430 they no longer appear in the list of smallholders. Those peasants have not "disappeared" in any sense; their circumstances have changed so that they no longer fit into the arbitrarily defined category of "smallholders". Possibly again the data mean that when smallholders died between 1400 and 1430, the lord either did not want to let those smallholdings or could not find anybody to take them on his terms. These and many other possible explanations are totally confused by the simple and apparently uncoloured phrase, "disappearance of smallholders". Such phrases, and there are many broader and worse examples, lead us to believe that an event took place, which, when we approach it closely, vanishes like a mirage.

In any event, there is no good reason to restrict the inquiry to economic matters, no good reason other than personal preference. What changed between 900 and 1900 was not any one thing but almost everything, some things more than others, and some things faster than others. Descendants of pious Catholics might be pious or not and Catholic or not. Descendants of slaves were, sooner or later, freemen. Descendants of serfs might be prime ministers, and descendants of barons might be factory workers. Descendants of people who spoke Anglo-Saxon might themselves speak Anglo-Norman or English. Descendants of men who deserted "faction" belong to a political party. Descendants of men who acknowledged no ruler other than the lord of their own manor regard themselves as owing allegiance to a nation-state. Some men lived out their lives quietly, as some still do; others moved about greatly in body or mind.

To make sense of such changes, even to recognize any small part of their vast number, means to understand how people lived at one time, how they lived later, and what intervened that might be thought to account for the difference. It is a formidable undertaking, not simplified in the least by representing it as though it were a single transition from something called feudalism to something else called capitalism.

Feudalism and capitalism, of course, never existed in the sense that particular human beings existed. They are abstract names, concocted as shorthand labels for a practically infinite set of facts about the lives of multitudes of people, whose diversity and singularities are well emphasized in F. J. West's contribution to the Kamenka volume. And we owe it to Marx that, apart from other objections, the two names are so ill-matched a pair. Feudalism was first a lawyer's term to describe the rules which at one time governed the ownership and use of land. It is still used in that sense, as for instance by S. F. C. Milsom, whose brilliant recent study, *The Legal Framework of English Feudalism*, shows how royal courts, established to reinforce the customary rules applied in the lords' courts, unintentionally helped to destroy the seigniorial order, by creating a sort of ownership "incompatible with a system of truly dependent tenures". Capitalism, on the other hand, denotes nothing about law. It was devised to represent the presence of capitalists in the process of production. To counterpose the name for a body of rules against the name for a set of economic actors does not help to clarify matters. In any event, capitalism is a biased name, intended to evoke righteous abhorrence of plutocrats and moneygrubbers. The way we live now, or more exactly the way Englishmen and Americans lived in 1900, is not to be understood by giving arbitrary priority to one fact among many, the fact that a few of them invested capital in production.

Any historian who believes that the relation of landlord to serf was the crucial aspect of medieval life and that the relation of capitalist to employees was the crucial aspect of life during the nineteenth century has reached his main conclusions before he starts his research. It matters a great deal that these conclusions cannot possibly be justified by any sort of historical investigation; it matters even more that by starting from such conclusions, the historian is doing a great deal to corrupt the practice of historical inquiry.

But of course the coupling of feudalism and capitalism by Marx was not intended to facilitate undogmatic historical research. Rather these terms were artifacts made for a theory which aims to predict the inevitable future of mankind. Many people would like to foreknow the future, and many try to foretell it. Such knowledge, if we could have it, would render us totally passive. To know, with certainty, that something must happen inevitably is to know that we can do nothing to alter or forestall it. History, written in the belief that it records the working out of an inescapable fate or unalterable progress, is therefore a strange history, in which human individuals are assumed to be totally ineffectual at least as concerns the main march of mankind. In this view, men delude themselves if they believe they can make any choice or exercise any intention about the large drift of events. Conversely, to study history as a record of what human beings did purposefully, if not always successfully, is to deny any inevitability about the outcome. That is why, finally, the question of how feudalism gave way to capitalism is so deeply antagonistic to the whole enterprise of the historian.

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by Sterling E. Lanier author of "Hero of Downing Street" and "The Desert Lords"

Who is Brigadier Flellowes? To quote one of his listeners at the club, 'He seems to have served in every branch of HM forces at one time or another, including Intelligence.' The Brigadier himself will admit only to certain accompanies, yet none of his stories have anything to do with warfare.

The Legacy

Ashes have scattered her,
her money disowns her,
but I sit down to write
at the desk she willed me,
watching the lamp resurrect
her glistening lives:

layer after layer I inherit
their light immortality,
where in the end my hand
will sign my furniture on
to children or friends,
before it stops still as hers,

and then is replaced again
in distant, unvisited rooms,
transcribing itself for ever
like shadows which follow it now,
uncurling themselves like smoke
on printed paper and skin.

Andrew Motion

In the cause of competition

By Edward Miller

D. C. COLEMAN and A. H. JOHN:
Trade Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England
Essays presented to F. J. Fisher
302pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £12.50.

T. S. WILLAN:
The Inland Trade
154pp. Manchester University Press. £5.95.

Trade Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England is an apt tribute to F. J. Fisher's influence as scholar and teacher at the London School of Economics, where his first appointment goes back to 1930; and it provides a review of many of the issues that are currently being debated in the period Fisher has made so much his own—the "pre-industrial" phase of English history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The essays are also neatly complemented by T. S. Willan's studies of the English inland trade during the same period in *The Inland Trade*. This is no well-worn topic, for the evidence upon which the historian can draw is sparse and difficult. The imperfection of existing knowledge makes Willan's circumstantial case studies all the more valuable.

Between them, then, these two books illuminate many facets of the history of preindustrial England; and, not least, they illustrate the elements of an older world that still constituted the groundwork of Tudor and Stuart life. The mentality of the nobility that fought the Hundred Years War, described with characteristic verve by A. R. Bridbury in one of the essays presented to Professor Fisher, may have been drastically modified as time passed; but elsewhere, even in the highest reaches of government and politics, change was far less marked. At one end of the time-scale Olive Coleman describes the "pseudo-calculations" that were part of the game of political argument in the late Middle Ages, when every interest constituted a lobby bent on furthering its own cause; at the other, D. C. Coleman shows, in connection with the proposed Anglo-French trade treaty in 1713, "mercantilist" logic and fallacious statistics being deployed not without an eye to the advantage of Levant and Portugal merchants, cloth exporters to Iberia, and manufacturers who had been the beneficiaries of past protectionism.

In other respects, too, old ways survived. The burgeoning nightlife of London, for example, faced formidable obstacles, as M. E. Falkus demonstrates. Those were literally "dark ages" in English towns, for in most of them a nine o'clock curfew was still in force subjecting even private conduct to constraints. In London, after curfew, "no man shall . . . keep any rule whereby such sudden outcry be made . . . as making any affray, or beating his wife or servant, or singing, or revelling in his house". Effective street lighting with oil lamps came to London late in the seventeenth century and spread rapidly thereafter to provincial towns as part of the eighteenth-century movement for "improvement". Even so Cambridge resisted it on the somewhat special grounds that, by making it easier for town and gown to recognize each other, lighting would render nocturnal fighting between them all the more frequent.

Professor Willan's studies likewise illustrate some of the traditional features of the times: the high cost of overland transport (especially for bulky commodities), the importance of river and coastal traffic in the distribution of goods, the major part played by local markets as "centres of exchange between town and country" and by regional fairs in both wholesale and retail trade. At the same time many craftsmen were still retailers as well as manufacturers, even though the retail shopkeeper was certainly no novelty. As early as 1587 John Bankhouse had virtually a department store in Kirkby Lonsdale, stocked with almost every variety of cloth and haberdashery, a wide range of groceries, and stationery and books which extended from ABCs to Aesop, Terence and Virgil. His enterprise is perhaps indicative of an economy becoming increasingly diversified, and the essays presented to Professor Fisher contain other pointers in the same direction. Ralph Davis demonstrates the part played by the English trade in the fifteenth century—"the age of Antwerp"; Ian Blanchard shows how technological progress made English lead interna-tionally competitive in the 1560s; and A. H. John explains the growth of English grain exports in the first half of the eighteenth century, marking the banishment of the spectre of famine which at intervals from the thirteenth century had haunted the minds of Englishmen.

These were the signs of a changing world, of which there are many others. The period is dominated by the astonishing growth of London, reflected alike in the mounting rivalry between connoisseurs under the early Stuarts described by Robert Ashton, and Willan's account of the Shuttleworths of Gawthorpe Hall, near Burnley, sending to London for groceries and mercery. At the same time, as Penelope Corfield establishes in her contribution, many provincial towns were also growing, with the result that between 1520 and 1700 the proportion of the population living in towns of 5,000 or more (including London) increased from 4 per cent to nearly 16 per cent. London was still uniquely large, but by 1700 England in general was one of the most urbanized of Western countries.

Alongside contributions on eighteenth-century fish marketing in London (W. M. Stern), government and the iron industry (G. Hammersley) and Defoe's economic ideas (Peter Earle), N. B. Harte includes another indication of changing times: the endeavours of governments, beginning as early as 1337, to prescribe the dress appropriate to different classes were abandoned in 1604 long before Adam Smith described them as "the highest impertinence and presumption". Increasing social differentiation and mobility, together with the rise of fashion, (in which once again London played a decisive role), made it increasingly difficult, so pursue such policies, founded as they were upon notions of immutable hierarchy. The sumptuary laws, in fact, seem seldom to have been enforced unless, as was the case with a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, in dispute with the Provost, breach of them was accompanied by his attorney in appearing wearing under his gown "a cut taffeta doublet of the fashion" and "a great pair of gallegaskins hose". This essay, like the rest, is an illustration of the diversity of inspiration that Professor Fisher's colleagues and pupils have derived, as their preface tells us, from "his wit and wisdom, his brilliant and devoted teaching".

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The walls of perfectionism

By J. F. C. Harrison

DOLORES HAYDEN :
Seven American Utopias
The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975
401pp. MIT Press. £12.75.

In America there were at least 130 communitarian settlements before the Civil War, and perhaps 150 between 1861 and 1918. One estimate puts the number of communes today as at least 1,000, the world's indicative a communal fervour surpassing even the 1840s when Emerson informed Carlyle that "not a reading man but has a draft of a new community in his waistcoat pocket". Communitarianism (that is, the radical reform of society by means of small experimental communities) has attracted the attention of historians of the nineteenth century, who have followed the lead given by Arthur Eugene Bestor's pioneer work, *Backwoods Utopias*, first published in 1950. An awareness of the physical remains of past communities has also developed in America in recent years—witness the preservation of sites, buildings and artifacts at Shaker villages (Hancock, Canterbury, Pleasant Hill) and at Bishop Hill, Nauvoo, Economy, Zoar, New Harmony, and Amana. So far the relation between the social and religious ideals of the communitarians and the buildings and landscapes which they evolved has not been explored from an architectural perspective. But now, in a fascinating study, *Seven American Utopias*, Dolores Hayden has provided us with the vital link between ideology and architecture, between the social and physical designs of American utopian communities.

She has selected seven communities as case studies : the Shakers of Hancock, Massachusetts ; the Mormons of Nauvoo, Illinois ; the Fourierists of the North American Phalanx, New Jersey ; the Perfectionists of Oneida, New York ; the Inspirationists of Amana, Iowa ; the Union Colonists of Greeley, Colorado ; and the Cooperative Colonists of Llano del Rio, California. Four of these were religious groups, three were non-sectarian. Five owned all land communally, two mixed private and communal ownership. In comparison with other communities the seven would rank between average and outstanding in terms of financial stability and longevity. Two communal industries—Oneida silverware and Amana woollens—became widely known and are still active today. All of the seven did a substantial amount of building, and their history is well documented.

Professor Hayden does not recognize, any traditional aesthetic distinction between "architecture" and "building". "I am concerned", she writes, "with the changing, continuous relationship between life style and life space. I am asking ... 'How does the liberated self emerge that is capable of turning time into life, space into community, and human relationships into the marvellous?'" To the usual charge that communitarians were crackpots and their experiments failures, she quotes Nathaniel Hawthorne, who lived at Brook Farm, to the effect that "even should we ultimately fail, the months or years spent in the trial would not have been wasted, either as regarded passing enjoyment or the experience which it supplied". Or, as John Humphrey Noyes, the founder of the Oneida community, put it : "We made a raid into an unknown country, charted it, and returned without the loss of a single man, woman, or child."

Communitarian reformers in the nineteenth century had a diversity of aims and programmes; but they all believed that social change could be effected by founding a model community which could then be duplicated everywhere. In this role some communitarians described themselves as "social architects" redesigning society, and their goals included both social and physical design. Their ideal community might be symbolized as a garden, a machine, or a model home. America as the garden of the world, a rediscovered paradise, was a familiar theme to Americans, and Edenic references by communitarians struck a familiar chord. Likewise the appeal to pastoral virtue as opposed to city vices was sure of a sympathetic response : Shakers and Fourierists projected an image of their settlements as pastoral retreats from the "wicked" or "unnatural" life of the cities. The community as machine was a symbol well calculated to appeal to the sympathies of such inventors as Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. Just as a mechanical invention could result in a machine which could be mass produced, so a community might be conceived as a social invention, a working prototype or (in Arthur Bestor's words), a "patent office model of the good society".

The community as an ideal home offered an alternative to the private, individualized family unit, which was condemned as wasteful and oppressive. Oneida Perfectionists, and Shakers—different as they were in so many respects—alike complained of the traditional attitudes to "woman's work", and looked for a model home where equality of the sexes and collective economy could be realized. Domestic inventions were one of the communitarians' most attractive advertisements.

"The spirit of a society is stamped upon its architecture", wrote Albert Brisbane, the leading American Fourierist : "do not the inanimate constructions which surround us proclaim the want of a new social order?" Existing environments reflected the ideology of capitalism and shaped behaviour accordingly, argued the reformers, and to meet the personal and social needs of a community radically different environments would have to be created. But how, and in what form, could an "architecture of social change" emerge? Symbolic concerns of the community as a garden, a machine, or a home could provide a starting point for design, but did not always go very far towards a plan of building and environmental layout. Only in the actual experience of living in a community could the precise problems be identified and the strategies of community-building tested. In their struggles to achieve a synthesis of ideological and architectural concerns the communitarians came face to face with design problems.

What were originally ideological or organizational conflicts were translated, for the architects and builders, into contradictions of design. Three such dilemmas were common to all the communities: the choice between authoritarian and participatory processes, between communal and private forms, and between unique and replicable designs. "These dilemmas survived", argues Professor Hayden, "from the communitarian definition that an experimental community must be controlled by innovative, collective but voluntary, unique but replicable. Only if communities resolved these contradictions in the process of design and building could they achieve their ideological and architectural goals." With skill and clarity Professor Hayden shows how each of the seven selected communities coped with these basic dilemmas.

In theory all communities involved their members in making decisions about how the institution should be run, what priorities should be given to different kinds of work, how disputes should be settled, and building should be carried out. The practice of democracy, especially participation and leadership varied very much between groups, and this was as true of design as of other aspects of community life. Generally the religious communities adopted a more authoritarian stance than the non-sectarians. Charismatic leadership enforced a cohesiveness which resulted in definite architectural statements of belief, though with some loss of adaptability to growth and change.

An authoritarian view of design saw it mainly in terms of the product; whereas for some non-sectarian communities the process itself was at least as important as the result. Shaker leaders and Amana elders built to designs which had been divinely revealed. Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, received the plans for the City of Zion and for the Nauvoo Temple direct from God. In contrast, the Fourierist members of the North American Phalanx rejected the grandiose plans of the authoritarian promoters in favour of a small dwelling in whose design and construction they could participate over several years. And at Oneida design by consensus was institutionalized to the extent that all the two hundred members were involved in the building programme for a period of thirty years.

However the problem of authority versus participation was resolved, a second dilemma of design confronted every community, namely the relation of communal to private space. The ideology of each communitarian group determined the proportions and layout of communal buildings, private housing, circulation paths and the allocation of space for various social and economic activities. In fact, for successful communal living a fairly sophisticated (albeit intuitive) understanding of environmental psychology was required. An awareness, for instance, of the way in which the social properties of space could promote or discourage certain types of relationships between members was shown by the Shakers, Oneidans and Fourierists.

The right balance between communal and private concerns could be controlled by the amount and type of space allocated to each. Thus, the Fourierists at the North American Phalanx provided a variety of types of housing—dormitories, family apartments, private dwellings—as well as communal buildings, and paid special attention to circulation and threshold spaces as a means of facilitating social encounters between members. At Amana the members lived in houses divided into suites, but without kitchens. Meals were eaten together at "kitchen houses", which thus became the collective centres of village life. Sexual relationships in a community created another category of design need. The celibate Shakers, who believed that sexual relations were sinful and who permitted men and women members to meet only in carefully controlled situations, built extra wide or dual staircases in their dwellings to avoid unnecessary contact between the sexes. The Oneidans, who practised complex marriage, experimented with a "tent room", which was an improvised combination of bedrooms and a sitting room. When this proved successful in providing the necessary discouragement of exclusive sexual attachments it was incorporated in a later building.

The third dilemma facing communitarians was how to choose between a unique and a replicable design. No matter how successful a community was in solving its other problems, it would remain an isolated experiment, having little effect on society at large, unless it could be duplicated. This was a hurdle which less than half of all communities managed to surmount. The choice was between unique buildings (perhaps monumental and impressive) on a particular site, and more modest buildings which could be put up in many places. The Mormons' Nauvoo Temple and Nauvoo House were examples of the former; the Shaker villages of the latter. Professor Hayden sees the most successful solution of the dilemma in the groups which developed vernacular styles related to the special economic and social structures of their societies, especially the Shakers and Inspirationists. An early Shaker hymn addresses the members as "ye living buildings"; and the simple, direct appeal of Shaker architecture (which we can still feel today) is "simply the result of the most consistent resolution of life style and life space achieved by any communal group".

Although the core of *Seven American Utopias* is a historical study, the last section is entitled "Learning from Utopia", and the author claims that we can do just that. For her the seven historic case studies are not just oddities but examples of permanent qualities which are relevant for communards and others today.

> Transcending the various outdated millennial religious and utopian socialisms, uniting all the case studies, is the communards' driving desire to shape new communities where landscape, workplaces and dwellings reflected a genuine egalitarian ideal.

So far the communes of today seem to have produced no architecture on a scale comparable with the communitarians of the nineteenth century. Nor do communards write books like Owen or Fourier relating social and political issues to design—although Professor Hayden draws an interesting comparison between communes using salvage and junk as building material (thereby cocking a snook at respectable, middle-class America) and the Shakers of the 1920s, in spirit there may be a good deal in common between devotees of *The Whole Earth Catalog* and the Fourierists of the 1840s, but there is as yet little to compare in the way of architecture. Whether or not *Seven American Utopias* is received as an acceptable handbook for practising communards, it is extremely welcome to social historians. The book is handsomely produced, with over 260 illustrations and plans, and is a most important addition to the literature of communitarian socialism.

Out of the west land

By John Lynch

GERMAN ARCINIEGAS :
América en Europa
327pp. Buenos Aires : Sudamericana.

"On the influence of European thought in America", writes Germán Arciniegas, "many books have been written. This is not the case in the opposite direction." In fact the impact of America on European thought has been studied in some distinguished works, that by John Elliott, *The Old World and the New*, for the early modern period, and that by Antonello Gerbi, *La disputa del Nuevo Mundo*, for the eighteenth century. The particular contribution of Germán Arciniegas, the Colombian man of letters, is to take a longer time span, from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth, drawing upon the work of previous scholars, and interpreting "America" in its widest sense, north and south, flora and fauna, the races, politics and revolution. He is an urbane and literate writer, an intellectual who enjoys the broad sweep and the study of cultural contrasts, and who has an instinctive rather than an archival grasp of Latin American history.

It must be said that on some of the more specific problems of *americanismo* and of the European vision of America he lacks the expertise of the professional historian and, to judge by his bibliography, he lacks in some cases the guidance of the appropriate monographs.

The early chapters concern the European reception of the discovery and, conquest, the curious but well-known history of More's Utopia, which was both an import from and an export to America, the impact of natural history in the cases of Loefling, Linnaeus, Humboldt and Darwin, and the inevitable discussion of the myth of the noble savage. The author then provides a more extended treatment, constituting over half the book, of Americanism and its influence in Europe in the age of reform, revolution and independence. Here he grapples with the problems of the Enlightenment and its prejudices, the eighteenth-century preoccupation in Spain, and American independence in the context of European thought, and he gives the story a new dimension by extending it into the nineteenth century, with chapters on Garibaldi, European counterrevolution and romanticism. While the author's treatment of those complex issues is never boring and never banal, he does not advance the subject beyond the present state of knowledge.

One of the elusive aspects of the eighteenth century in Spanish America was the development of an American identity, a new self-awareness, an incipient nationalism which took America out of Europe, as it were. Alexander von Humboldt remarked upon it : "The creoles prefer to be called Americans . . . they are frequently heard to declare with pride, 'I am not a Spaniard, I am an American,' words which reveal the symptoms of a long resentment." Spanish Americans began to rediscover their heritage in a uniquely American literature. Among the first to give cultural expression to "Americanism" were the American Jesuits expelled from their homelands in 1767, who became in exile literary precursors of American nationalism. They wrote to dispel European ignorance of their countries, and in particular to attack the myth of the inferiority of man, animal and vegetable in the New World, a myth propagated by a number of anti-American works of the mid-eighteenth century. Buffon asserted that American immaturity could be seen in the puma, which was more cowardly than the lion ; De Pauw alleged that the Mexican Indians could only count up to three ; Raynal referred to American decrepitude and even censured America for the "excessive altitude of the Peruvian mountains". In reply the exiles described, for a European audience, the history of their countries, their resources and qualities, producing in the process works of scholarship as well as of literature.

Within Spanish America itself the pre-independence period saw the emergence of a new literature which belonged to American rather than Spanish culture. Americans glorified their countries, extolled their resources and praised their peoples. No doubt there was something pretentious about some works ; their patriotism was exaggerated ; and their knowledge of other parts of the world was unimpressive. But they are important as a reaction against European prejudice and as a stage in American cultural development.

In the early days of the revolution for independence, Mexican nationalists such as Padre Morelos used the term "American" to describe their country, and they referred to themselves as "Americanos", or "la nación americana". The conservative statesman and historian, Lucas Alamán, remarked : "It was very common among Mexicans to speak of the whole of America when referring to Mexico, either out of boastfulness or because they thought that America had to follow Mexico's example in everything, as Mexico was such a principal part of America." The practice did not endure and it was the United States which appropriated the term "America". But it was, for the Mexicans another affirmation of nationality, to mark them off from European Spaniards. The definition of American nationality vis-à-vis Europe is not really explored by Arciniegas. Nor does he consider the place of Latin America in the economic thinking of Europe in the nineteenth century, or the Latin America described in the reports of merchants, travellers and consuls. But perhaps that is another story.

The extremist tradition

By Max Beloff

MELVIN J. LASKY :
Utopia and Revolution
726pp. Macmillan. £15.

Melvin Lasky's thoughtful book *Utopia and Revolution*, the first half of a projected study, makes few concessions to the hasty or idle reader. Mr Lasky has a distinct message to deliver and a distinctive point of view, but he sees no reason to make anyone a present of them. They emerge from the documents that he quotes so lavishly and from his comments upon them, either in the text itself or in the notes which take up over a hundred pages of close print at the end of the volume. One is invited to embark on a voyage of discovery across the three centuries that elapsed between the writing of More's *Utopia* and the new era that began with the ending of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, not without some glances before and after, and over a geographical span embracing London and Naples, Paris and Prague.

The directions with which the traveller thus embarking is provided are contained in the work's subtitle : "On the Origins of a Metaphor or Some Illustrations of the Problems of Political Temperament and Intellectual Climate and How Ideas, Ideals, and Ideologies have been Historically Related" (capitalization preserved). But (as has been demonstrated by some previous reviewers whose professorial chairs seem to have been acquired on the basis of learning less profound than plain Mr Lasky's) that may not be enough. Let us attempt therefore, a child's guide to Lasky.

Western societies in the post-Renaissance era have (at least until quite recently) produced a succession of revolutions against their imperfections which have taken the form of postulating imaginary societies — utopias — based upon the idea that different social arrangements might conduce to more rational behaviour and to greater human happiness. The utopian tradition is linked with the older more religiously inspired millonarianism from the point of view of content, and linked, from the point of view of the literary genre, with works in which the pictures of imaginary societies are used simply to satirize what exists. Neither of those linkages, however, figures largely in Mr Lasky's own analysis. The utopian tradition proper, which was normally collectivist in inspiration, culminated in the socialist writings of the nineteenth century to which Marx and the Marxists constantly contrasted their own "scientific socialism". One might add that in the post-Marxist era, the utopian tradition took on a new form in the idealization of actually existing societies in other countries. The Webbs' *Soviet Communism* is the most famous example of this new utopianism, and with the tarnishing of the Soviet image a new utopian literature about Communist China has taken its place.

In making this last remark, I do not overlook the fact that *Utopia and Revolution* is concerned only with the pre-Marxist era and that to suggest how Mr Lasky is going to conclude his argument can only be by way of extrapolation of the discussion before us.

What the Marxists did, however, was not to make socialism scientific in the sense of replacing the utopian visions of a future society by one more directly related to experience and capable of being supported by empirical tests, but by denying the need to worry about the problem at all. The important thing was to destroy the unjust present—the scientific element in the doctrine dealt only with the inevitability of revolution, and what happened afterwards could be left to look after itself. Since utopias have by definition never existed, while revolutions, actual or frustrated, have punctuated European history ever since the middle of the seventeenth century and are endemic in the rest of the world today, "revolution" is a more important concept than "utopia". It is not surprising that is is the metaphor of revolution which forms the main object of Mr Lasky's inquiry.

By using the term "metaphor" Mr Lasky calls attention to the importance of the change of meaning over the years in the word "revolution". It is a metaphor taken from astronomy where it refers to the revolutions of the heavenly bodies. The most obvious fact about these revolutions is that the heavenly bodies come back to the same place. In other words, the word revolution as we find it for instance in our own "Glorious Revolution" of 1688-89 implies that society or government has been perverted, thrown off course, and that what is needful is to bring it back to its pristine health. The idea of revolution there depended on one of the most universal and powerful of social ideas, namely that there was a golden age to which return is possible. It is as prevalent in ecclesiastical as in secular history. What happened over a period was an alteration in the meaning of revolution brought about both by the utopian current and by the development (itself a reflection of new discoveries and inventions in many fields) of the idea of progress, so that by the time of the French Revolution, revolutionaries could see themselves as forward-looking not as backward-looking, and revolution itself as a means of furthering social improvement in novel directions no longer justified by appeals to the past.

Lasky has been suggested that this quasi-philosophical approach to the history of ideas exaggerates the importance of words as against the brute facts of oppression and exploitation which are the true causes of revolution, and not only for Marxists. But this is an error, though it is perhaps a pity that Mr Lasky should keep the reader waiting until page 443 for his own explanation of what it is he is trying to do :

> Workaday men in an active society, naturally agitated by change and growth and conflict, usually make their decisions about war and politics (if theirs is the decision to make) without pedantic reference to stiff formulations of poets and philosophers. To suggest that the intelligentsia in its phraseology and moral palpitations, often brings to "self-consciousness" the problem of an epoch, is not to say that the word is the thing. . . Yet the life and death of an idea or an image can often serve as a soft analogical reference to a hard state of social forces that dominate an epoch.

But this again is not the whole story. Political language, with its inevitable stock of images and metaphors—the cleansing fire, the rising tide, the corrupted blood that must flow, the heads that must roll—affects the modes of action of those who use it. It is the only way we have of trying to enter into the minds of the men who make revolutions or resist them. And we in our own day who have seen so much play with political terms (and here again one is going ahead of Mr Lasky's "people's democracies" for unblushing tyrannies, "national liberation movements" for gangs of murderers—should see the force of the argument when applied to earlier periods :

> Metaphors in politics are the imaginative symbols of social realities but they serve not infrequently as escape mechanisms ; for images can dominate or darken, and analogues turn easily into a species of false literary consciousness in which the surface of similes can conceal more than it reveals. In the history of political thought and sentiment, where so much has been couched in the opulent vocabulary of

Early British

WILFRID BONSER and JUNE TROY :
A Prehistoric Bibliography
425pp. Oxford : Blackwell. £26.

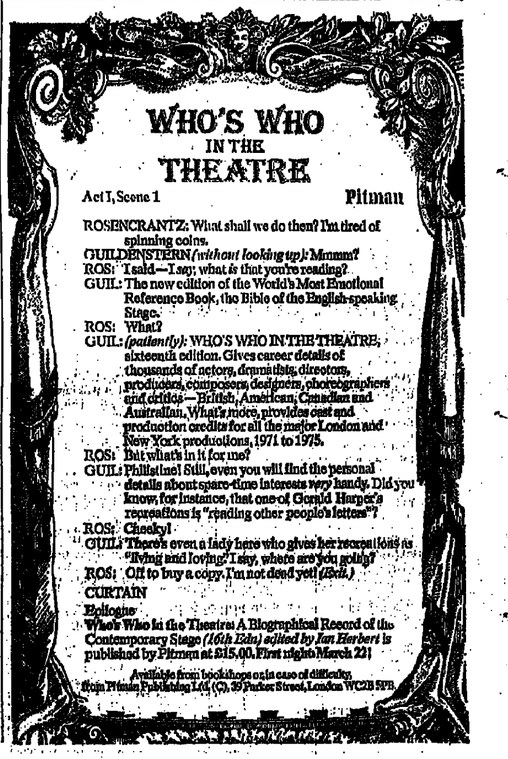
A Prehistoric Bibliography is less all-embracing than the title suggests, being restricted to the British Isles, but on the other hand extends its range in time into the historic Roman and Saxon periods with some few references. Wilfrid Bonser had already produced a *Romano-British Bibliography* which covered the bulk of this material, and the present book was still in progress when he died. June Troy in turn was prevented from seeing the project through to completion, and the publisher is to be commended on bringing out this useful work of reference in spite of these setbacks and delays, and the inevitable escalation of price which will restrict its circulation. It covers field surveys, specific sites, finds (metal, stone and pottery), economy and lifestyle, each divided into territorial zones embracing the regional groups of the Council for British Archaeology ; this arrangement makes it easy to locate and compare references, while the provision of a number for each reference makes the index much less bulky than conventional methods. The price apart, the book is a useful tool for the British archaeologist.

Norman Hammond

Another of Mr Lasky's main contentions may strike some readers as a little harder to sustain. Mr Lasky's work covers much of western Europe ; and Latin, German, Italian, French, as well as English sources, are called upon to illustrate his text. Yet aware though he is of the international complexities of his subject and of the common use made of metaphor and analogy, England is for Mr Lasky something very special. It was in England from the time of the Glorious Revolution on to the eve of the first Reform Bill that he sees developing in its political thought and style (with obvious parallels in theology) a specifically English coolness and balance, which provided (along no doubt with Nelson's ships) the great barrier to the revolutionary utopianism of the French-inspired movements of the Continent.

What he says is no doubt historically correct. But has he done enough to show that we are in the presence of a permanent and immutable aspect of the English character ? Were early nineteenth-century Whig reformers more typically English than the Fifth Monarchy men who were such a thorn in Cromwell's flesh ? I am personally unconvinced. Let me explain why, with an observation drawn from life and not from political literature. When I pass our local Woolworth's on a Saturday morning, I see sheltering under its arcade an elderly and battered man selling fundamentalist Socialist papers and tracts and with him a number of unkempt, pallid youths either having one or other Trotskyist or such-like journal. They try to press their wares upon the passing workers from the great plants up the road, themselves groaning not under the chains of capitalism, but under the weight of their spouses' well-filled shopping-bags. The headlines of their journals evoke the images of conspiracies against the common weal that have formed the staple of revolutionary agitation from the sixteenth century, indeed from earlier times yet. It cannot be much fun ; their wares are not much in demand. Are they not however in the true English tradition of revolutionary extremism ? Must not James Callaghan and Denis Healey feel about them and their teachers very much as Oliver Cromwell must have felt about their remote spiritual ancestors ?

هكذا من الأصل



The great Chinese bead game

By Theodore Ziolkowski

URSULA CHI :
Die Weisheit Chinas und 'Das Glasperlenspiel'
235pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM24.

Hermann Hesse's admirers have often believed it possible to pinpoint the object of their esteem through a process of geocultural triangulation, whereby Hesse is located and defined by his relationship to such spiritual vertices as Basel, Swabia, Italy, the United States, India, or China. Ursula Chi's study presupposes this kind of literary trigonometry. The book begins with a "mosaic of influences" that determined Hesse's beliefs: principally influences of the home (father, mother, maternal grandfather), German culture (Goethe and Nietzsche), and Eastern thought (India and China). After outlining the genesis of *Das Glasperlenspiel*, the author surveys critical reactions to Hesse's works, singling out for approving emphasis those few critics who have had anything to say about Chinese elements in the late *opus magnum*.

Professor Chi focuses her attention principally on three examples of Chinese thought. Although Hesse became acquainted with Confucianism before the First World War, it was not until the 1920s that he came to appreciate the grandeur of that ethical system. Initially he was attracted more spontaneously to the "magical" aspects of Chinese culture than to its moral order: specifically, to the wisdom exemplified by the personality of Lao-tse, in whom Hesse saw a foreshadowing of Jesus; and to the *I Ching*, which Hesse first read in the 1924 translation by Richard Wilhelm and where he found vivid images for spiritual conflict and its resolution.

Professor Chi's discussion of *Das Glasperlenspiel* is devoted almost wholly to demonstrating the presence of Chinese elements in the novel. She shows that these elements were first introduced in the third and fourth versions of the "Introduction", as Hesse's original caustic critique of contemporary society gradually made way for the portrayal of a timeless Castalia. Specifically, Hesse's interest in Chinese music contributed to the content of the Glass Bead Game as it is described in that "Introduction", while the ideograms of the Chinese language along with signs of the *I Ching* helped to shape the form and rules of the game itself. In the old music master, whose androgynous personality embodies the overcoming of life's polarities, Professor Chi sees the simplicity, naturalness, and modesty characteristic of Lao-tse. A different exemplary role is played by the scholar of Chinese known as the Elder Brother, who teaches Knecht the meaning of the *I Ching*.

In the person of Knecht all three influences are resolved into the model of a totally integrated personality combining the piety of Lao-tse with the reason of Confucius—a synthesis that corresponds to the categories *fromm* and *vernünftig* outlined by Hesse in his essay "Ein Stückchen Theologie". Through the signs of the *I Ching*, where "water" represents Lao-tse and "mountain" Confucius, these extremes can be brought together symbolically in a fruitful new unity. Chi concludes by analysing Knecht's death scene with reference to the six great signs of the *I Ching*: mountain, water, fire, heaven, earth, and sea.

For her factual evidence Professor Chi has at no point gone beyond three recent sources: *Hermann Hesse: Eine Werkgeschichte*, edited by Siegfried Unseld; *Materialien zu Hermann Hesses 'Das Glasperlenspiel'*, edited by Volker Michels; and Adrian Hsia's *Hermann Hesse und China: Darstellung, Materialien und Interpretation*. To be sure, her presentation of Confucius, Lao-tse, and the *I Ching* provides a clear and well-informed introduction to these three monuments of Chinese culture. But the discussion of *Das Glasperlenspiel*, hardly an original interpretation, amounts to not much more than a description of the novel in sinological terms.

The danger of *lux ex oriente*, either natural or spiritual, is that the viewer, dazzled by the sun's radiance, will project its after-image on to everything he sees. Wherever Professor Chi looks she sees China. Yet often a simpler Occidental explanation is readily at hand. For instance, Hesse's notion of *Eigensinn* is at least as close to Emerson's "Self Reliance" as it is to Confucian integrity. Nor is it necessary to cite the Confucian faith in the essential identity of name and being to explain Hesse's delight in onomastic play. (Is Thomas Mann for that reason also a Confucian?) The themes of service and sacrifice are already present in *Peter Camenzind*, years before Hesse was first exposed to Chinese thought. And the attribution of Knecht's death to the *I Ching* ignores the fact that the motif of death by water appears in many of his earlier works (e.g. *Unterm Rad, Klein und Wagner*). Indeed, many of his works contain scenes in which the six great symbols appear simply because he was fond of natural settings with mountains and lakes and sun and sky.

In a few cases, as Adrian Hsia has convincingly proved, Hesse borrowed specific images from Chinese literature. But as far as his thought is concerned, it would be more accurate to say that Hesse found in China a confirmation of his ideas rather than the source for them. Finally, future studies should qualify the phenomenon of Hesse and China by locating it within the intellectual chinoiserie of the 1920s (e.g. Malraux's *La Tentation de l'Occident*), of which Hesse's obsession constituted a serious yet none the less typical aspect.

Dance to the sound of gunfire

By Michael Hamburger

HORST BIENEK :
Die erste Polka
378pp. DM29.80.
Gleiwitzer Kindheit
Gedichte aus zwanzig Jahren
146pp. DM19.80.
Munich: Hanser.

The fact that most German poets, unlike most English poets, also write prose fiction is a striking one, but it is rarely mentioned, let alone discussed. One obvious reason for the difference is that even poets, in both Germanies, still regard themselves, and are still regarded, as professional writers. Another, that the German word *Dichtung* applies to any kind of imaginative or creative writing; and even though the word is not favoured at present, because of its associations with a bardic megalomania once widespread both in verse and prose, its inclusiveness has not been called in question. Yet the matter remains a highly problematic one. Most good poets can also write good prose, but very few indeed can write good prose fiction; and vice versa, of course. The difference between the two forms, and between the kinds of specialization they demand, remains as crucial as ever. This is not the place to elaborate the distinction between the processes involved; but the accident of reviewing a novel and a selection of poems by the same writer makes an awareness of it very nearly inescapable. In addition, Horst Bienek's novel *Die erste Polka* has a setting, and includes many details, familiar to readers of his earlier poems, so that much of the material is the same, and one cannot help reflecting on the processes applied to this material in the two media.

The setting is Horst Bienek's home-town, Gleiwitz in Upper Silesia, and the action takes place within a day or two of the outbreak of the last war, with distant gunfire to be heard towards the end. Right up to the end of a complex and gripping plot flashbacks fill in the history not only of the main characters but also of the place and the region, with its German-Polish symbiosis always threatened by political conflict. As a regional novel *Die erste Polka* is comparable to the work of two other poet-novelists of the eastern border regions that have proved so fertile in post-war German literature, that of Günter Grass and Johannes Bobrowski; but Bienek's narrative manner is less idiosyncratic, indeed, almost old-fashioned apart from his blunt treatment of sexual and erotic behaviour.

The historical dimension is deepened by what amounts to a sub-plot, the concern of one of the characters, Montag, with the political leader Korfanty, about whom he intends to write a book. Almost melodramatic, or apocalyptic, as the action is—involving possible murder, rape, and Montag's suicide at the very moment when the blitzkrieg is released—the novel manages to be neither sensational nor implausible.

Its political and ethical theme never becomes a thesis, but is left to the imagination and sympathy of each reader. Nor have the characters been idealized. Even the two adolescents, Josel and Andreas, like the girl friend Ulla whom they share, are humanly fallible enough to be convincing; and so is Josel's mother, Valeska, with her combination of Catholic piety with shrewd business operations in real estate, on the one hand, and her piano teaching on the other. The character of the region is inextricably bound up with the characters and actions of the people in the book, and that character is cursed, as well as celebrated, in the course of the narrative. This rich ambivalence has a great deal to do with the success of Bienek's new novel. Its autobiographical concerns have been subordinated to the demands of the medium, and much more thoroughly than in Bienek's earlier novel *Die Zelle*, based on his experience of being a political prisoner in the Soviet Union.

Understandable and central though they are, Bienek's autobiographical obsessions have served him less well in most of the poems collected in *Gleiwitzer Kindheit*. In the sequence of that name, and in the other long poem *Flucht, vergeblich*, the same personal experiences on which he has drawn for *Die erste Polka* are evoked or listed, but the medium never attains the autonomy it demands.

Some essential structuring impetus is lacking in almost all his poems, so that they become statements or notes towards a poem rather than the real, organic thing. They are all packed with interesting observations and thoughts, but they do not come alive poetically, because their rhythmic and syntactic articulation is not that of lyrical poetry. However relevant a poem may be to Bienek's dominant preoccupations—and many of them are urgently so—one rarely feels that the poem had to take its particular form, that its words had to be those words and no others. This is true even of his most recent poems, first published in book form here, such as the sequence about Australia, with its interesting, but somehow not necessary, glosses on Patrick White's *Voss*. The same marginal and fortuitous element inheres in the sequence *Das Haus*, with the possible exception of the shortest piece in it, *Die Katze*, which has the organic unity of a poem, despite its seeming casualness.

After all, then, it seems as though Bienek will have to choose between verse and prose fiction, if the choice has not already been made for him. Whatever the anti-inspiration theorists may say to the contrary—and no matter what other term is substituted for inspiration—poems will continue to defy mere choice; and Bienek's mastery of the medium of prose fiction in *Die erste Polka* points to a development in that direction.

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Landscape without figures

By John Osborne

GERHART HAUPTMANN :
Italienische Reise 1897
Tagebuchaufzeichnungen
Edited by Martin Machatzke
230pp. Berlin: Propyläen. DM28.

The great fascination which Italy seems always to have held for German writers, even before Goethe, was particularly strong during the 1890s. During these years Heinrich and Thomas Mann, George, Rilke, Hofmannsthal, and many other writers, artists, and musicians made the journey across the Alps. In terms of contemporary reputation, the most celebrated was Gerhart Hauptmann who, at the time of travelling, had already written *Die Weber* and had, some two months previously, seen the successful première of *Die versunkene Glocke*.

The mention of those two plays is enough to indicate that Hauptmann's Italian journey occurred at a time of uncertainty in his creative life. At the same time he was undergoing a crisis in his personal life; his companion in Italy was the young Margarete Marschalk, whom he was to marry some ten years later, after the final breakdown of his marriage with Marie Thienemann. Part of the interest of these diaries arises from the remarkable fusion of the private and the public; there is very little reference to the domestic crisis, but there are times when Hauptmann's justification of his artistic development and his—not yet complete—abandonment of the style and the moral ethos of his early naturalist dramas reads like a justification of his hesitant abandonment of Marie for Margarete.

The material published here consists of Hauptmann's diary entries from January 23, 1897, when he left Dresden for Italy, to May 20, 1897, when he returned to Nuremberg. These entries constitute the first part of a diary which, in manuscript (Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin West, Hs 1), continues up to June 14, 1898. The decision to publish the material as a separate and complete entity is an editorial one; and the title, *Italienische Reise*, is the editor's, not the author's. It is an unfortunate choice, in that it overemphasizes the Goethe *imitatio* which Hauptmann undoubtedly practised, but which is less in evidence here than one might be led to expect. In other respects the editorship of Martin Machatzke, joint-editor of the Centenary Edition of Hauptmann's works, and the author of a fine study of Hauptmann's Winckelmann-fragment, is immaculate.

Hauptmann's route took him through Venice, Florence, Rome, Sorrento, where he stayed for a month, and back via Rome, Perugia, and Milan. In the various cities Hauptmann sees only the works of art they house; in Venice, of course, the city itself is seen as a work of art; and apart from Michaelangelo's "Pietà", Rome is virtually non-existent; outside the cities he sees only landscape, predominantly in its most vast and impersonal forms, sea and mountain. For the renegade naturalist Italy seems to be devoid of people, especially people involved in everyday social activity. When people are acknowledged it is usually because they have disturbed the author in some way; like the old hag who emerges from a dark corner of the Church of the Redeemer (an interesting anticipation of a scene in the "Schnee" chapter of *Der Zauberberg*), or the doctor, who bothers Hauptmann with his dilettante poetry.

Hauptmann is clearly at his happiest in the undisturbed privacy of creation, which he tends to see here in inspirational, quasi-religious terms; the methods of observation and analysis associated with Zola are dismissed as "Scharlatanshumbug", and Hauptmann angrily rejects the suggestion that his own work owes anything to [illegible] of the French novelists. There are, however, moments when Hauptmann admits that he is "burying his head in the sand", or involuntarily concedes that his current attitude represents a flight from the problems of life. It is also a retreat from the kind of art at which he had hitherto excelled, and of which we are occasionally reminded when the personal element breaks through the—frequently pretentious—facade he is constructing; as in the farewell to Marie, or the quarrel with his brother Carl. The editor tactfully introduces a few more anecdotes concerning Marie's attempts to patch up the marriage, including an interesting reference to a plan to rent an apartment in a large villa in Switzerland, owned by none other than August Bebel. Unpretentiously handled, this is the kind of material which had provided the basis of much of Hauptmann's best work, and it will continue to do so in plays such as *Bernd, Fuhrmann Henschel*, and *Die Ratten*. It is surely not coincidence that, apart from the more directly autobiographical *Buch der Leidenschaft*, the works which are most deeply rooted in this journey, [illegible] *tullhassan, Die Venezianer*, *Winckelmann*, were destined to remain fragments. Hauptmann's Italian journey was not the voyage of discovery that it had been for Goethe.

The mind's own medium

By P. N. Johnson-Laird

JERRY A. FODOR :
The Language of Thought
214pp. Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester. £8.95.

One of psychology's more engaging foibles is its tendency to treat each new automatic artifact as a metaphor for mentality. The brain has been likened to clockwork, to a telephone exchange, and latterly of course to a computer. The great virtue of the computer metaphor is that it accommodates the hoary dichotomy between the brain and the mind. A computer is an organized physical system, but theoretically it does not much matter whether it is built from relays, transistors, microchips, or even a system of hydraulic valves. If its circuitry is appropriate, then it can imitate the behaviour of any other computer.

The crux of the matter is not the nature of its physical realization, but the logic of its operations. What a computer actually does on any occasion depends on the signal that is put into it. Electronic computers are built to receive signals made up of sequential patterns of electrical impulses, and their power stems from the fact that different patterns trigger different computational operations according to the particular code of the machine. Complex computations can be elicited by a whole sequence of signals in this code, and such sequences are known as "programs". The brain, too, is an organized physical system, and perhaps the operations of the mind are merely its computations, depending not so much on the physiology of nerve cells as on the logic of their operations. However, if mental processes are indeed analogous to the operations of a computer, then they must occur in some internal language analogous to a machine code. The purpose of the present book is to delineate this language of thought.

Jerry A. Fodor is a philosopher by training, but he is perhaps best known for his work in linguistics and psycholinguistics. In collaboration with J. J. Katz he developed the first theory of semantics compatible with Chomsky's conception of grammar, and, more recently, he and his associates at MIT have carried out an ingeniously contrived series of investigations into the perception of syntactic relations. Without his more empirically-minded collaborators to keep his feet on the ground, Professor Fodor is free in the present book to indulge in what he calls "speculative psychology", and to explore the operations of the mind in the light of empirical results from cognitive psychology. He has written an individual work in which he parts company with former colleagues and collaborators. Yet, instead of the free-floating speculations and imaginative insights one had hoped for, *The Language of Thought* is something of a leaky balloon: it seldom rises high enough for the reader to perceive more than a local region of cognitive theory or to appreciate that the limits of its purview have become familiar territory to other explorers.

The idea that thought occurs in some internal representational medium is, of course, a resolutely mentalistic one. It is incompatible with attempts to reduce psychology either to relations between observable stimuli and responses or to physiological explanations. Professor Fodor is accordingly at pains to demolish both these forms of reductionism. However, he is not so much concerned with proving his basic thesis as with working out its consequences and, in particular, with framing some plausible constraints on the nature and vocabulary of the internal representational language.

One traditional view is that there is, indeed, a language of thought: it is the natural language an individual speaks as a mother tongue. The trouble is, as Professor Fodor points out, such a medium can hardly itself be utilized by the mental processes involved in acquiring a native language.

If, as seems plausible, knowing the meaning of a linguistic predicate such as "red" amounts to knowing a rule that determines the set of things of which that predicate is true, then it follows that you cannot learn your native tongue unless you already possess an internal language in which such rules can be represented. Obviously, this internal language is not learnt (or else there would be an infinite regress), and so it must be innate. But, surely an innate internal language is susceptible to Wittgenstein's argument that a "private" language is impossible. Professor Fodor cunningly sidesteps this thrust. He points out that it is one thing to determine that terms in a private language are used consistently—a task which is impossible, as Wittgenstein showed—but quite another thing actually to employ them consistently, which is all that is required for a language of thought.

What, then, is the relation between natural language and the language of thought? The answer to this question turns out to be a central concern of the book. Professor Fodor draws on an analogy established by other theorists. Computer programs are not generally written in machine code, which is extremely cumbersome, but in higher-order languages such as ALGOL or FORTRAN which have a relatively straightforward syntax and terms that are convenient abbreviations for complex computations. In order to run a program in a higher-order language, it must first be translated into the machine code that the particular computer was built to use. The translation is, in turn, carried out by a special program, and the process is known as "compilation". A natural language is analogous to a higher-order programming language in that it, too, has to be translated into the internal language that human beings are "built" to use. In other words, the process of understanding a sentence is analogous to the compilation of a computer program.

One problem arises from the assumption that the rules specifying the meanings of words must be representable in the internal language. It follows that the internal language will have to be rich enough to express the semantics of any word in any natural language. But, as Professor Fodor himself remarks, this concluson seems dangerously close to a *reductio ad absurdum* of his theory. Nevertheless, he presses on undaunted to explore its consequences and finds nothing unacceptable in them. For example, the cognitive development of children through a series of stages cannot (*pace* Piaget) reflect a *learnt* increase in logical power. Either a child's performance improves as a result of better powers of memory or attention, or else a genuine shift in conceptual ability is brought about by some form of maturation. Thus, Professor Fodor claims that an enhancement of logical power can occur only by "rewiring" the cognitive organ: the ordinary processes of learning cannot lead to the acquisition of ideas of a greater logical sophistication than those already embodied in the internal language.

However, there is still some advantage to be gained in acquiring a natural language, since it allows simple terms to stand for complex concepts and such economies make for more efficient thinking.

Although Professor Fodor believes that characterizing the nature of the language of thought is an empirical matter calling for a long-term collaboration between different disciplines, the major weakness of his book is its almost complete neglect of work in Artificial Intelligence. One looks in vain for any discussion of the contributions to semantics of Winograd, Woods, and Schank, or of their colleagues on this side of the Atlantic, Isard and Longuet-Higgins. This neglect of, or distaste for, actual attempts to explore the computer metaphor diminishes the scope of the book and leads Professor Fodor into unnecessary difficulties. For example, he is much exercised by whether the vocabulary of the internal language is made up of underlying primitive terms that can be combined together so as to capture the semantics of the actual vocabulary of natural languages.

Ultimately, he abandons this line of work, which he pioneered with Katz, and proposes instead that the vocabulary of the internal language is almost identical to the vocabulary of natural language. If you learn, say, that the word *triturate* means *to grind to a fine powder*, then your internal language is enriched by an item corresponding to *triturate*, and an abbreviatory convention specifying its meaning is added to your long-term store of rules of inference. It is extraordinary that after his earlier arguments carefully distinguishing the language of thought from natural language, Professor Fodor virtually comes round to identifying them: the internal language contains representations of the vocabulary of the natural language, and most of the semantics of words is handed over to a new cognitive component, the principles of logic (*sic*).

Why does Professor Fodor take this step? The explicit reason is that at the time he was writing there was little evidence to suggest that the process of comprehension requires words to be analysed into some sort of semantic constituents. Yet he makes the sensible point that human beings manage the nature of their internal representations in an intelligent manner, and the idea that on some occasions words are reduced to primitives, and on other occasions not, can hardly have escaped his attention—after all, in a skill such as driving a car, we sometimes pay attention to minute muscle movements and at other times are completely oblivious of them. Why does he ignore the possibility? The implicit reason may be because conventional linguistic theories of meaning provide no mechanisms for dealing with such options.

However, there are advanced programming languages which make it possible to develop exactly the sort of theory that is needed. Indeed, programs have been written in which information can be manipulated either in terms of semantic primitives or at the sophisticated level of actual vocabulary. This solution is both elegant and workable. At the very least, it is a serious alternative to Professor Fodor's theory, and one can only regret that he fails to consider it. Other failures to explore actual computer implementations of ideas similar (or opposed) to his own diminish the book.

One final criticism has to be made. Professor Fodor has an awkwardly ostentatious style. His writing is dense, prolix, and difficult to understand. It is also weighed down with footnotes, which are often no more than advertisements for his talent at making philosophy out of nothing. Indeed, at times their excess baggage so clutters up the page, that his craft almost goes out of control; his occasional attempts to lighten the load by resorting to the vernacular merely return it to earth with a sudden jolt.

Categorically imperative

By Eva Schaper

T. E. WILKERSON :
Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: A Commentary for Students
221pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £6.

The history of presenting Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* to students is the history of what has mattered most to philosophers at a given time. Contemporary British philosophy has added one of the more interesting chapters with the work of P. F. Strawson, Jonathan Bennett, W. H. Walsh and others. Analytical philosophy approached Kant without reverence and developed a somewhat surprised, if also bemused, respect for some—but by no means all—of his intricate argument.

T. E. Wilkerson's Kant bears a close resemblance to Professor Strawson's: the conception of what [illegible], and the distillation of logically respectable arguments from their entanglement in Kant's own heady mixture of insight and fantasy follows Strawson fairly closely. Mr Wilkerson disclaims having written the Prolegomena to Strawson's *Critique*, but being the poor man's Strawson is not necessarily a bad thing: certainly, Mr Wilkerson is less demanding, less involuted, and, of course, briefer—virtues which no student will despise.

Mr Wilkerson's selection is nicely geared to the students' needs. He assumes in his readers not so much familiarity with Kant as familiarity with the ways of analytical philosophy. At the end of it his student may be less well versed in the text than students of Kemp Smith, Paton or Ewing used to be; but he should be able to recognize a Kantian argument when he meets one, and turn it to some use in his own philosophical preoccupations. These will already have prepared him for an investigation into the conditions of knowledge, Kant's sharp distinction between intuitions of sense and concepts of the understanding limits the aspirations of philosophical speculation to arguments in which we have genuine knowledge only of what is in space and time and amenable to certain general principles of cognition, recognition and connectibility according to rules. In Mr Wilkerson's sensible programme of "exposition, criticism and sympathetic reconstruction" of those arguments which do not stray from this straight and narrow path, very little—predictably—survives from the Transcendental Aesthetic; we get to the central parts of the Analytic with commendable speed, and are even treated to the salient points of the Dialectic in an unhurried way.

The most disappointing pages of the book are those which comment on the Transcendental Deduction, the central argument of the *Critique* in Kant's own estimation. Even allowing for the romantic notion that somehow, sometime, someone will miraculously make all clear being just a romantic notion Mr Wilkerson disappoints in the sketchiness of his exposition. The best that can be said of his account of why there must be categories of thought without which experience would not be possible at all, is that it is faithful to Kant in at least this respect: he too peters out. This is a pity, for the exploration of connections between the unity of experience and the experience of unity is one of the potentially more exciting tasks of philosophy, which Kant discovered and which the *Critique* bequeaths to us.

Perhaps though we should be glad instead for the reconstruction of Kant's sequel to the Deduction, the "Refutation of Idealism", which is, to this reviewer at least, the most interesting and rewarding section of the book. Moving Strawson's emphasis on re-identification of items in experience to a central position, and stitching together the as yet unsubstantiated conclusions of the Deduction with some sound steps in the arguments for individual categories of thought, Mr Wilkerson comes up with an impressive argument for the necessary lawlikeness of experience of an independently existing world of objects and events. If the *Critique*, when suitably reshuffled, provides enough support for this, then surely we might forgive and forget the rest.

The comparative restraint of the selective commentary gives way in the end to a brisk lecture on where Kant went wrong. "Extravagant doctrine" earlier and briefly dismissed is disinterred to odd effect. True, there is a useful account of objections to Kant's philosophy of mathematics, but the idea of a "transcendental argument" for eliciting the necessary conditions of knowledge is rather quaintly described as "slightly peripheral". What, one wonders, have we been doing so far if not arguing transcendentally? Considering the amount of interesting work on this topic in recent years, Mr Wilkerson's chapter on it is, to say the least, slight.

Weightier, if highly polemical, is the discussion of Transcendental Idealism. Something, of course, was needed, for a *Critique* without it would be like *Hamlet* without the ghost. In line with all recent writers on Kant, Mr Wilkerson sees in it the unacceptable face of Kantianism. This is the view that behind the appearance we know of there lurk unknowable things-in-themselves (noumenalism) and that the objects of experience are only collections of perceptions (phenomenalism). But this view, Mr Wilkerson urges, cannot be prevented from collapsing into an idealism barely distinguishable from Berkeley's. The charge is not new and a case can be made for it, but only if we reinstate everything we had to ignore in order to get the interesting arguments which Mr Wilkerson himself found in Kant's own refutation of idealism. More useful would have been some consideration of Kant's moves in the direction of a "negative" idealism in which noumena figure as limiting concepts only. Arguments aside, Kant's metaphysical pictures clearly still exert a fascination even on the most determinedly analytical minds.

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The elements of Engels

By Fritz Raddatz

W. O. HENDERSON :
The Life of Friedrich Engels
Two Volumes
853pp. Coss. £12 each.

This biography is worthy but grey ; we are told a vast amount about Engels, but the man himself never really emerges. W. O. Henderson never sets the scene and his narrative is one-paced. He seems, moreover, unconcerned with style ; at one point, seven consecutive paragraphs start, respectively, with the words: "Engels described. . . . Next Engels gave an account. . . . Engels argued. . . . Engels discussed. . . . Engels concluded. . . . Engels discussed. . . . Engels stated. . . ."

Yet Engels's life certainly did not lack colour. As a pietist schoolboy he was asked, "who was Goethe?" —"A godless fellow", he replied. As a young merchant in Elberfeld, he sipped tea in correct literary gatherings, at which there were songs and readings aloud. In England he became a wealthy communist who liked to give champagne suppers, and celebrate Christmas with lavish get-togethers at which enough food was provided to feed an army. Professor Henderson eschews such aspects of Engels's life.

The result is remarkable ; a mass of correct details adds up to a whole which is incorrect. The book, conceived as little more than a factual account, ultimately proves unreliable, and incapable of shedding light on many of the striking features in the interplay between Engels's life and his politics. A case in point is Marx's illegitimate son Frederick, born to his housekeeper Helena Demuth. Like others before him, Professor Henderson prints the celebrated letter Louise Freyberger wrote to August Bebel, stating that Marx was the father. His footnote correctly states, "a copy of this letter is in the Bernstein papers in the International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam". What he fails to add is that there is no original of this important letter: the copy in Amsterdam is an unofficial typewritten one without a signature. Whatever the probability, it is nowhere proved that Marx was Frederick Demuth's father.

Again Professor Henderson states that "when Mary died he [Engels] lived with her sister Lizzie"; but Engels was living with Lizzie *before* Mary Burns, his mistress, died—in the same house, in an "ossiette à trois"—and it seems a little naive to conceal what has long been known. Another example: Professor Henderson's account of how Marx and Engels's friendship almost foundered is also, in a sense, incorrect. On the death of Engels's companion—with whom Mrs Marx (whose false visiting cards read "née Baroness Westphalen") refused even to shake hands—Marx reacted in a very rude and cynical way.

Engels later protested in a letter that he had never completely forgiven his friend's brutality. (Marx did apologize, however—perhaps for the only time in his life.) Professor Henderson dismisses Engels's outburst in a few lines—surely a somewhat misleading under-emphasis. The book is studded with quotations which are often quite unnecessary, yet this letter, which would have been of great interest, is not included. Such material is as central to a work entitled *The Life of Friedrich Engels* as are the outrageous letters between Engels and Marx's daughter Laura Lafargue, written after Marx's death, and concerning the highly unedifying dispute over the inheritance. Professor Henderson refers to the correspondence (which Emile Bottigelli has recently edited), but does not reveal its contents.

A further, quite crucial objection: the author, I feel, lacks the delicate sense of balance which alone must justify, or condemn, a life of Engels. Without Marx, his Engels would be non-existent. It takes great skill to ensure that Marx is ever present but unseen, rather than the full who seems to make the Engels visible. Professor Henderson, in passing, provides a parallel biography of Marx. He gives, for example, a full account of the foundation, with which Engels was in no way concerned, of the First International, and on page after page, the paragraphs start with the same formula : "Marx and Engels . . ." (Robert Hunt, the East German philosopher, mocks this habitual pairing of the two names in his autobiography, when he tells how the police, who were searching his house, looked puzzled when he spoke of Engels. He explained patiently, "You know, the Marxandengels Engels".)

But we do not need that Marx here. Professor Henderson is full of details about Marx's meetings with contemporaries whom Engels never knew. The quarrel with the socialist tailor Weitling scarcely involved Engels, and Professor Henderson's claim that "Weitling . . . was praised both by Karl Marx and Heinrich Heine" is only half true ; Heine repudiated Weitling with great ferocity. At times, Engels vanishes altogether to make way for Marx, but there is no mention of the fact that it was Engels and not Marx who, as recent research has established, formulated the famous slogan, "Workers of the world, unite". Henderson describes feuds in which Engels played no part, but, curiously, he leaves out some of those in which he did. The quarrel with Hyndman, which was the result of Engels's jealousy, gets a mention, but there is no attempt to analyse what its effects were on both men and especially its consequence of isolating Engels in English politics.

Engels is seen in this book as an important historian, especially in the field of military history. In fact, scarcely one of his historical analyses was correct, and all his predictions about wars, alliances and revolutions proved wrong. "Revolutionary uprising of the French proletariat—World War—such is the contents page of the year 1840"; 1849 was, however, the calmest of years. "August 1850 at the latest", then 1851 and 1852 were to herald economic crisis and revolution—but things turned out otherwise. Marx asked what had become of the crisis, and Engels knew precisely : these), but factors which helped to determine the modes of his political thought and behaviour. In 1847 Engels rigged an election and wrote triumphantly about it to Marx: "The new catechism will be sent to London behind the back of the cells . . . obviously no one must know about this or there will be a frightful scandal."

Accurate description is insufficient for this kind of detail ; if the biographer plans to be something more than a Leporello of history, he must not avoid expressing his doubts and concerns about such a passage. For here we have the thinking of the Party Central Committee, before a Central Committee existed. The hubris of leadership should have been brought out. Use should have been made too of Engels's recently discovered libretto "Cola di Rienzi" (which Professor Henderson fails even to mention), of his appeals to the Paris Commune that it should be seen as a "dictatorship of the proletariat", of the two faces of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in the 1848 Revolution (when Marx and Engels were closer to the democrats than to the revolutionaries), and the almost Stalinist campaign to eliminate Bakunin. The pieces are all there, but, alas, they are not fitted together.

The Lawrence and Wishart edition of the Collected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels has reached Volume 7. The volumes now run from the early work of Marx on the philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus, through the early journalism and correspondence of Engels from 1838 to 1842, and many of the major Marxist texts including the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, the *Holy Family* and Engels's *The Condition of the Working Classes in England*. Volumo 5 is mainly devoted to *The German Ideology* and the latest volume to the journalism of Marx and Engels for the *Neue Rheinischer Zeitung* in 1848. Each volume costs £3.

The pioneers in person

By Stephen Koss

JOYCE M. BELLAMY and JOHN SAVILLE (Editors) :
Dictionary of Labour Biography
Volume 3
236pp. Macmillan. £20.

Like its commendable predecessors Volume 1 of the *Dictionary of Labour Biography* may be read as much for sheer enjoyment as for helpful reference. It contains some eighty pen portraits, all diligently researched and many subtly shaded ; appended to each is bibliographical note, sometimes longer than the entry itself.

Although many of the men and women who populate the present instalment were connected with either the iron trades or the early history of the Independent Labour Party, the field remains broad and the perspectives are infinitely varied. The subjects range in time from Willis A. Ashton, a Chartist born in 1806, to J. P. D. Lacey, a Portsmouth alderman and trade unionist who died in 1976. The juxtaposition of generations points up some interesting contrasts: Ashton, prosecuted for using seditious language during the great weavers' strike of 1829, eventually exiled himself to Australia ; Stephen Swingler (1915-69), who marched with the CND to Aldermaston, went on to become a minister of the Crown.

A commitment to socialist doctrines is not a requirement for inclusion in the table of contents, still less for a pedestal in the Labour pantheon. What or without is the majority of these people participated in the accelerating shift of political allegiance from Liberalism to Labour. As early as 1874, John Kane (1819-76) challenged the sitting Liberal member at Middlesbrough, where his anti-Gladstonian stand probably became counter productive". In 1891, James Bartley (1850-1926) helped to found the Bradford Labour Union, which made severance from Liberalism a prerequisite for membership ; Malcolm Dean (1858-1937) and R. K. Hartley (1855-1918) were among those who broke with the LibLab tradition in the stormy years before the First World War. More cynically, Sir Percy Kilden (1862-1944) was carried along by the floodtide after 1918. But A. C. Edwards (1869-1938) quit the Liberal Party only in 1931, when its parliamentary remnant "refused to preserve the principle and practice of Gladstone, Campbell-Bannerman, and Asquith".

The traditions of evangelical Nonconformity run strong in the veins of most of these individuals, among whom Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists figure prominently. In her 1951 election address at North West Leeds, Marian Veitch (1913-73) still professed an aim "to interpret the Christian ethic in terms of practical politics". John Herriotts (1874-1935) was relatively unusual, particularly for a Welsh miner, in having "no particular religious affiliations for most of his life". Yet it is the singular achievement of the *DLB* to find an exception to nearly every rule. Along with the countless Labour pioneers who worked for temperance reform, there was also Noah Ablett (1883-1935), "a marvellously persuasive speaker" on miners' platforms until his "intemperance had developed to the point where it was widely accepted that his habits would impair his effectiveness as a national leader".

Several subjects championed the cause of women's suffrage, and two of the most remarkable were themselves women: Lady Dilke (1840-1904) and Susan Lawrence (1871-1947). Sean Hutton and Barbara Nield collaborated on the first piece, and Neil E. Martin wrote the second. J. E. B. Boswell (1906-71) and Jessie Holliday (1884-1915) add an aesthetic dimension as well as an element of human interest.

Inevitably, the compendium affords some curiosities : B. Cantwell (1864-1906), an anarchist aptly named ; and Gabriel ("Honest Gabe") Price (1879-1934) who, believing himself inadequate to represent Hemsworth in the 1931 Parliament, drowned himself in the river Calder.

Strident imperialists like Albert Smith (1867-1942), who maintained that "there were as many throbbing hearts amongst the Labour Party for a good solid Empire as there was [*sic*] in the Conservative Party", jostle in these pages with such pacifists as F. C. Pyle (1870-1948) and R. C. Wallhead (1869-1934). Perhaps the sharpest differences are to be found over responses to the First World War and the aims for which it was fought. John Hill (1862-1945) gave "critical support" to the Allied effort, but incurred "considerable unpopularity with some sections of the union movement" by favouring a negotiated settlement. His antagonists would have included John Hodge (1855-1937), who declared in 1915 that "the men who talk about peace only have traitors to their country", and who took the "Hang the Kaiser" line in the 1918 election. James Wignall (1856-1925) was another who swathed himself in khaki, winning election for the Forest of Dean by arguing that the victors should "compel those who made the war PAY THE COST".

Relations with the Soviet Union accentuated certain differences and created others. A. J. Cook (1883-1931) and W. P. Richardson (1873-1930) consorted with communists and together sought financial assistance from Russian trade unions before A decade later, with the approach of another war, Grace Cadman (1892-1971) preached "security for the future, through the building up of a peace front, which must include Russia". By contrast, W. L. Cluse (1875-1955) rejected "the cry for a" popular front with communists at home and abroad" and "The Now Machiavellians".

On the whole, however, Soviet influences were far weaker than those exerted by contacts with the United States and Australia. Not that travel necessarily confirmed or fortified progressive views: T. M. Kettle, disenchanted on a visit in 1900, underwent "a fairly sudden conversion to Christianity" that led him to deflect his energies to missionary work.

As these examples would indicate, this volume encompasses personalities of diverse backgrounds, interests, and attitudes. Virtually all of them were persons of humble means, with Sir Richard Coppock (1885-1971) leaving the largest estate at £32,000. Asides from a few isolated passages, their stories are recounted without rhetoric and with as much detail as one could possibly expect. It may be less than vital that Miss Colman was a cousin of Ronald Colman, the actor, or that the daughter-in-law of Alice Gibson (1859-1939) captains the local Girls' Brigade company in Birmingham. The editors and their thirty-one contributors obviously prefer to tell us too much rather than too little. And, given the indifference and neglect that previously prevailed, their patience is doubly appreciated.

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Artifacts in the abstract

By Cyril Mango

ERNST KITZINGER :
The Art of Byzantium and the Medieval West
Edited by W. Eugene Kleinbauer
419pp. Indiana University Press. £18.

Ernst Kitzinger enjoys a high reputation among historians of Byzantine art. While his published oeuvre has not been as abundant as that of several other eminent specialists, such as A. Grabar, O. Demus or K. Weitzmann, he may be thought to make up in quality what he lacks in volume. The reprinting of a selection of his more important articles provides an opportunity to assess his contribution.

The studies republished here, and edited by W. Eugene Kleinbauer, first appeared between 1949 and 1973. They concern three periods: from Constantine to Justinian ; from Justinian to the eighth century ; from the late eleventh century to the thirteenth, the last with particular reference to mosaics in southern Italy and Sicily. Since this is a photo-offset reprint, no changes have been introduced into the text, but the author provides a few pages of mainly bibliographic addenda.

There can be no question of Kitzinger's wide-ranging knowledge, his subtlety and his meticulousness. He also writes good English, something that cannot be said of many of his *confrères*. Yet, on re-reading these essays after a lapse of several years, I was struck by certain peculiarities of his approach that I found disconcerting. He tends, for example, to draw sweeping conclusions from insufficient evidence, as he does, to my mind, in the first essay. Here he discusses a small marble relief in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, a relief, be it said, of unknown provenance and unproven authenticity (since even Kitzinger is unable to tell us what possible use it could have been put to), and on the basis of this rather minor object which he dates to c. AD 390 and attributes to the "imperial atelier" of Constantinople, he declares that already by that date the eastern capital had become the focus of Greek Christian art. The conclusion need not be wrong, but if it is to be accepted, it ought to be founded on a series of major monuments that were definitely produced in Constantinople. What is more, such a series does exist.

The same tendency to derive broad inferences from inadequate premises is discernible in the two interconnected essays on mosaic pavements. Here Kitzinger starts with the observation that the classical manner of organizing a pavement, which entailed a three-dimensional framed picture or *emblema* sunk, as it were, into an ornamental background, gave way in the fifth century to a continuous carpet-like design. In the next century, he believes, and more particularly in the reign of Justinian, this framed picture came back, though bereft of much of its three-dimensional quality, and this phenomenon he chooses to call a "Justinianic renaissance". He does not tell us how high in the sixth century is the incidence of framed pictures, and the example he lays most stress on, that of the St Demetrius basilica at Nicopolis (Actium) happens to be undated. But even if we grant that there was a passing fashion for framed pictures in pavement mosaics during Justinian's reign, does that amount to a renaissance? Would it not be truer to say that the great burst of artistic activity during that period was the very opposite of retrospective? Did not Justinian's artists and architects abandon the classical forms of the capital and the horizontal entablature, did they not in their most prestigious buildings banish the mosaic pavement altogether, did they not introduce a new and distinctly unclassical decorative vocabulary?

Another and, this time, more pervasive aspect of Kitzinger's method is that he treats his subject-matter in terms that are excessively abstract, not to say philosophical. He tells us in the preface that he has been concerned mostly with the visual aspect of artifacts and to a degree this is true ; but he uses these visual qualities to construct a system of Platonic ideas whose contact with reality is not particularly close. The group of essays dealing with the period from the sixth to the eighth century offers a good illustration of this approach. Here Kitzinger begins by selecting in the art of Constantinople after Justinian a few examples embodying opposite artistic tendencies which he characterizes as "perennial hellenism", on the one hand, and the abstract current, on the other. This gives him a dichotomy, and Kitzinger is very fond of dichotomies. It is true that he has some trouble in unearthing the abstract current at Constantinople and can cite only two examples of it, namely the figural medallions on the cross of Justin II in St Peter's, Rome (these medallions being no bigger than an inch and a half in diameter) and the Stuma paten at Istanbul which most scholars have attributed to Syria and which, moreover, is not so much abstract as incompetent.

Having thus postulated an abstract current, he then attributes to it the seventh-century donor mosaics in St Demetrius, Thessaloniki, although he cannot decide if these were done by artists from the capital or by local artists under Constantinopolitan influence. The next step is to eliminate the possibility of provincial influence on the formation of the abstract style and Kitzinger does so by declaring (I believe quite wrongly) that Syria and Palestine had by this time become artistic backwaters. He wants to show that the abstract style originated in Constantinople itself and to relate it to the growing role of the icon in popular worship, a subject to which he has devoted an excellent essay. Having come thus far, however, Kitzinger is reluctant to establish a direct connection between the cult of the icon and the abstract style.

Not content with one dichotomy, he now introduces a second in the guise of artistic "modes". I.e. distinct manners attached to particular categories of subject-matter: thus a hellenistic "mode", he thinks, is appropriate to secular subjects, but somehow thinks that the "Olympian" variant was "keyed not so much to physiognomic externals as to a certain ethos", while the "Oriental" variant was intended as a more exact likeness, which is why it looks more abstract. Had he applied the same criteria to the portraits of Byzantine emperors on the coinage of the period, he might have obtained even more startling antinomies. Why, for example, is the portrait of Constantine V so much more lifelike than those of both his predecessors and his successors? Suggested answer : it was meant to represent an ethos and not a particular emperor.

The above remarks convey only a faint idea of the complexity of Kitzinger's argumentation, a complexity that is further aggravated by his tendency to qualify nearly every general statement he makes. I have no doubt that he has thought long and hard about the problems of Byzantine art. It also seems to me that like many professors who have never wielded a brush or a chisel, he is profoundly puzzled by the artistic act, even one of the most ordinary character. If only it could be fitted into some dichotomy or antinomy, if it could be shown to exemplify some mode within a style, all would be well. In the process we learn a great deal about Kitzinger's mind and somewhat less about Byzantine art.

Paths of destruction

By Robin Cormack

Dumbarton Oaks Papers
Number 29
358pp. Centre for Byzantine Studies/ New York: J. J. Augustin.

When the annual *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* appeared for 1973, the *TLS* reviewer noted with dismay the results of a survey of major Byzantine churches on the southern coast of the Marmara which revealed them to be reduced to ruins or to use as a chicken farm. Three studies in the new *Papers* document the next stage of "survival"—monuments which have disappeared in the past hundred years, but which can be recreated from photographs or drawings. The fifth or sixth-century church at Tomarza near Kayseri in central Turkey is given its first "full" architectural description by Stephen Hill. It was burnt down around 1921, but photographs exist in Newcastle University Library taken by Gertrude Bell in 1909.

Another monument, also published by Stephen Hill, is the Praetorium at Musmiye in Syria, which was a second-century building converted into a church probably before 450. This centrally planned structure was dismantled for the construction of barracks around 1890, but is illustrated here with photographs taken by an American missionary in 1875, a few years before the paintings in the apse were destroyed by Egyptologists in the late nineteenth century, and are studied here from the nineteenth-century watercolours of G. G. Wilkinson.

Five related articles originated as lectures given at Dumbarton Oaks in 1974 in a symposium on the decline of Byzantine civilization in Asia Minor (eleventh-fifteenth century). Peter Charanis sees no single explanation for the breakdown of effective Byzantine control in Anatolia after the battle of Manzikert in 1071 ended the apparent recovery staged by the region in the ninth and tenth centuries, after the Persian and Arab devastations. Hélène Ahrweiler reviews the end of the union in the thirteenth century and asks whether the sack of Constantinople in 1204 by the exiled court in Nicaea from the luxury and corruption which had characterized the government in the capital. She suggests that what did develop in Nicaea was a new religious solidarity regarding the Latin Church which became a dominant element in late Byzantine politics.

Speros Vryonis, the convener of the symposium, documents the destructiveness of the nomads in Asia Minor, while Anthony Bryer explains why the empire of Trebizond, far from succumbing to these Türkmen, managed to thrive instead of suffering like Anatolia. Nicole Thierry surveys the art of Asia Minor over the period, when the operative factor in artistic quality seems to lie in the relation of the patron to Constantinople. For example, at the beginning of the period she suggests that the good quality wall-painting in the mid-eleventh-century rock-cut church of Karanlik Kilise in Cappadocia is to be attributed to the status of one of the donors, who is described as an *ennômatikos*. This term, so far unelucidated, is interpreted here as an official from the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

These five symposium papers are usefully supplemented by a study by Judith Herrin on the realities of provincial government in another part of the empire (central Greece from 1180 to 1205). Her documentation explains how the inefficiencies and rapid turnover of civil and military officials were offset by the permanent presence of a capable bishop, with the consequence that the Church gained and maintained a dominant position in provincial society.

The concluding fieldwork section of the *Papers* has two preliminary reports on excavations supported by Dumbarton Oaks. Recent finds at Kalenderhane Camii at Istanbul are published by Cecil Striker and Dogan Kuban ; this monument was maintained as a church throughout the Byzantine period, and has now been superbly restored—for use as a mosque.

His rescue excavation at Dibsi Faraj in North Syria is described by Richard Harper. This settlement of the first to the tenth century, due to be flooded by the lake of the Euphrates Dam at Tabqa, is identified as Athis, later renamed Neocaesarcia. A swift and thorough excavation exposed military installations, housing, public buildings, and two churches, of which the one outside the lower town defences contained a mosaic floor panel which described the basilica as a Martyrium completed in 420. The report is accompanied by excellent aerial photographs taken by Richard Anderson using a camera flown from a kite. Both these excavations have now been completed.

This number of the *Papers* maintains their position as the prime publication of Byzantine research, but less space is devoted to new material discovered by excavations or restortion sponsored by Dumbarton Oaks.

What the lamas say

By Michael Aris

DETLEF INGO LAUF :
Tibetan Sacred Art
The Heritage of Tantra
238pp. with 86 colour plates and 17 line drawings. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £24.

This luxurious book, it is claimed on the dust-jacket, reveals Tibetan art on its own terms for the first time. Detlef Ingo Lauf maintains in the foreword that his work will take the reader right up to the more difficult levels of arcane Tibetan knowledge which would normally come within the sphere of Buddhist initiation". It is difficult to imagine how either of these two claims can be justified, and on closer inspection it appears that while on the one hand the printed matter contains very little to do with the art of Tibet, on the other hand its religious content is limited to a general, if somewhat pedestrian, presentation of certain basic themes in Tibetan Buddhism. In order to illustrate these themes eighty-six colour plates and seventeen line drawings have been included. The book should perhaps have been entitled "An Illustrated Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism". Unfortunately several books have already appeared for which this could have served as a convenient subtitle.

The first chapter, "Nature and Origins of Lamaism", sets the tone for the book. The author's method is basically one of contrasting and reworking some of the stories told by the Tibetans themselves in such a way as to present these as the product of objective analysis. The recorded history of the Tibetans starts in the seventh century and is found in numerous sources from then on. The task of putting all these together to form some sort of a coherent picture of the early period is at a stage where most scholars feel reluctant to commit themselves to the authority of individual documents that cannot be substantiated by means of comparison and cross-reference. Although we are becoming more and more astonished by the validity of the Tibetan historical tradition, many of the assumptions of early Western scholarship are steadily being exploded since these assumptions were based largely on the natural prejudices and limited scope of single sources.

One might hope that a popularizing work of this sort would gather together some of these revisions but instead we are presented in *Tibetan Sacred Art* with a further reiteration of the original myths. Thus the statement that "the Bon Religion was the original ancient religion of Tibet" is extraordinary when we consider the paths taken by many scholars to show that on the contrary *Bon* most probably had its origins to the south-west of Tibet, where India bordered on Iran. The *Mural Art of Pho-ya*, a vital work on the important cult of Avalokiteśvara, is said to belong to the seventh century, whereas it is in fact widely accepted now as an apocryphal compilation of the twelfth century.

The chapters devoted to Buddhist symbolism in Tibet are equally unsatisfying and for much the same reasons. All symbols clamour for an interpretation, but unless they are firmly related to the cultural milieu in which they are operative the process of explanation inevitably leads to their denaturing. Speaking of the role and function of the guardian deities, Lauf tells us that "the sight of these wrathful representations on a black background engender psychic processes of individuation which demand a thorough preparation and an advanced knowledge of manipulation of the forces and powers of human consciousness". The book is replete with statements of this sort which beg many questions, leaving the really important ones unanswered. (Why and by what means did the cult of the guardian deities gain such prominence in Tibet?) Few readers will feel this work represents an advance on our knowledge of the subject and none, I suspect, will agree that it takes them where Dr Lauf says it does.

Those who can afford to buy it will want *Tibetan Sacred Art* for its illustrations, which reproduce a selection of paintings and images preserved in museums and private collections in the West and also some photographs taken by the author during his travels on the southern periphery of Tibet where one still meets with many fine examples of Tibetan art *in situ*. Little clear indication as to the exact location of these examples is given, and this will no doubt further reduce the value of this book for the serious art-historian. The explanatory notes accompanying the illustrations attempt to give dates to most specimens according to the styles they are thought to embody, a dangerous system in view of the indisputable fact that styles are fatefully copied many years after their introduction. It is only after careful study of those paintings and images that are dateable by their inscriptions or by textual reference that general pronouncements of the sort Dr Lauf delights in begin to have meaning.

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Librarians' Scale, £2,127-£3,282 per annum plus £312 per annum supplement

Applications for the above post are invited from suitably qualified Librarians. The person appointed will be responsible for the administration of the West Mobile Library, which is based at Witney and which serves an attractive area of West Oxfordshire.
The minimum salary for a Chartered Librarian will be £2,922 per annum plus supplement, and for a person who has completed Part 2 of the Library Association Examinations or its equivalent £2,529 per annum plus supplement.
Removal and resettlement allowances of up to £500 and separation allowances of £8 per week will be paid in appropriate cases.
A description of the post and an application form may be obtained from the County Librarian, County Libraries' Headquarters, Holton Park, Wheatley, Oxford OX9 1QQ. Closing date : 8th April, 1977.

Deputy Librarian

£2,619-£3,345/£3,774 Weybridge

For Brooklands Technical College. The College Library is housed in a new purpose built Library accommodating some 30,000 books as well as other learning resources, slides, tapes, transparencies, records, etc. No Saturday work. Applicants should be mature people with an intermediate or full qualification. Qualification bar at £3,845.

Application form and further details from the Chief Administrative Officer, Tel. Weybridge 53300.

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
GATESHEAD TECHNICAL COLLEGE
COLLEGE
ADMINISTRATIVE LIBRARIAN

Grade APT (£2,922-£3,282 plus £312 annual salary supplement)

Applicants must be qualified Librarians and preferably have experience of library work in an educational institution. The successful applicant will be in charge of the College Library but will not be expected to carry out tutoring duties.
Salary and Conditions of Service are in accordance with the N.J.C. Agreement for APT and C Services.
The post is superannuable and subject to satisfactory medical clearance and X-ray result.
Application forms are available from the Principal, Gateshead Technical College, Durham Road, Gateshead NE8 4EH, and are returnable by 4th April, 1977.

KENT County Council Education Department

COUNTY LIBRARY

ASSISTANT COUNTY LIBRARIAN (ADMINISTRATION)

£5,889-£6,564 plus £312 supplement

Must be a Chartered Librarian with appropriate experience.

Further particulars and application form, returnable by April 8, from the County Librarian, Kent County Library, Springfield, Maidstone ME14 2LH ; 'phone 54371, extension 377.

Buckinghamshire County Council

Lending Librarian

Bletchley Library

*AP3/4 £2,922 to £3,702

Schools' Librarian (Primary)

Based at Woburn Sands Library

*AP3 £2,922 to £3,282

Minimum requirement for both posts : Chartered Librarian (*plus £312 Annual Salary Supplement).
NJC Conditions of Service. Successful candidates subject to medical examination. Removal expenses of up to £150 and Lodgings Allowance of £8 per week pending removal.
Applications (no forms), together with the names and addresses of two referees, to the County Librarian, County Hall, Aylesbury, to be received by April 14, 1977, from whom further details may be obtained.

THE BRITISH LIBRARY
(Reference Division)
requires

2 RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Applications are invited for 2 temporary posts in the German Section of the Department of Printed Books. These posts will be for a period of up to six months and the duties will be primarily cataloguing of German books. Candidates should therefore have competence in the German language and qualifications and (or experience in cataloguing by AACR) ; experience of working with the MARC system could be an advantage.
Salary £2,614 to £3,992. An additional supplement of £313.20 p.a. is also payable. Please phone or write for application forms :
JIM MUNGAL
THE BRITISH LIBRARY
REF. DIV. (DIVISIONAL OFFICE)
GREAT RUSSELL STREET
LONDON WC1B 3DG
Phone 01636 1544
Ext. 261/469
Closing date 29th March and completed applications should be returned not later than 4th April.

REMINDER

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The Times Literary Supplement
Times Newspapers Limited
PO Box No 7
New Printing House Square
Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8EZ

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

MILTON KEYNES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

SUB LIBRARIAN

£3,366-£3,708 plus £312 income supplement

A Sub Librarian is required by Milton Keynes Development Corporation. The library serves the information needs of the staff engaged in planning, designing and constructing the new city of Milton Keynes. The subjects covered in the library include architecture, building, civil engineering, planning, commerce and industry, landscaping, law, estate management, ecology, archaeology, social welfare and housing. Preferred age range 25/45.
The two sub libraries consist mainly of trade literature, standards, codes of practices and related reference works. The person appointed will be responsible for organising the two sub libraries. The trade literature collection at the main library will also be this person's responsibility.
Library qualifications and previous library experience, preferably in a technical organization, are essential. A current driving licence is essential.
Excellent conditions of service include 24½ days annual leave plus 21 days Corporation holiday, free life assurance and a choice of contributory superannuation schemes.
Applications QUOTING REFERENCE TLS/1381 AND THE JOB TITLE should be sent to the Personnel Manager, Milton Keynes Development Corporation, Wavendon Tower, Wavendon, Milton Keynes, MK17 8LX, by not later than 31st March 1977.

Leisure Services

Assistant Librarian

MANSFIELD DISTRICT

Librarian's Scale £2,127-£3,282 plus £312 supplement

(minimum £2,922 plus £312 for Chartered Librarians)

Applicants (male or female) should be qualified librarians with the enthusiasm and imagination to help realise the potential of the new Mansfield Central Library. The 42,000 sq ft building will open to the public on 31 March and will offer a full range of library facilities. These include a free record and cassette lending service with listening facilities in the library, a theatre, a suite of lecture and meeting rooms and a coffee bar. The post offers excellent opportunities to become involved in a progressive public library service and the successful applicant will be particularly involved in readers' advisory services.
Generous assistance will be given with the expenses incurred in moving house in accordance with the Authority's scheme.
Further details from the Staffing section at the address below or by telephoning Notts. 668555 ext 351. Applications, including full personal and career details and the names of two referees, should reach the Director of Leisure Services, Trent Bridge House, Fox Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, by Tuesday, 12 April.

Nottinghamshire County Council
County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

Deputy Branch Librarian A.P.4

£3,651 to £3,987 (including London Weighting) plus £312 Salary Supplement

Applications are invited for the above post, from Chartered Librarians with suitable experience.
Application form and further details from Central Administration, Libraries and Museums Department, Hall Place, Bourne Road, Bexley, Kent.
Closing date : April 7, 1977.

Bexley London Borough

Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

... to collect, prepare, edit, and index material for incorporation in the National Register of archives, or for publication ; and deal with requests for historical information.
Candidates must have a degree with 1st or 2nd class honours, or a post-graduate degree, preferably in history. They must also have a good reading knowledge of Latin and one modern foreign European language, and experience of (or an aptitude for) dealing with post-medieval historical records.
SALARY (Inner London) : as RA Grade I (£4,030-£5,230 ; RA Grade II £2,925-£4,305. Level of appointment and starting salary according to age, qualifications and experience. Non-contributory pension scheme.
For further details and an application form (to be returned by 18 April 1977) write to Civil Service Commission, Alencon Link, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 1JB or telephone Basingstoke (0256) 68551 (answering service operates outside office hours). Please quote ref G(8)382.

UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
Trinity College

CHAIR OF TEACHER EDUCATION

A second Chair of Education is being established. The person appointed will head a new department and be responsible for the education of primary and secondary teachers.
Persons interested should write for further particulars to :

The Secretary,
West Theatre,
Trinity College, Dublin 2

to whom applications should be sent, preferably before Friday April 22, 1977.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
EDUCATION

School Librarian

AP3 £2,922-£3,282 plus £312 Supplement

A Chartered Librarian (male or female) is required at the North Border Comprehensive School, Brodsley, Doncaster, S. Yorks. Generous assistance will be given with the expenses incurred in moving house in accordance with the Authority's scheme.
For further details please write to the Assistant County Librarian (ref. SCC), Education Library Service, County Library, Angel Row, Nottingham or ring Notts. 412121, ext. 64.
Applications (with names and addresses of two referees should reach the Headmaster at the School) not later than Friday, April 15, 1977.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

SENIOR LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Applications are invited for the post of Senior Library Assistant. The Library provides an intensive multimedia service for the staff of the University. The Senior Library Assistant will be in charge of the Library Loans service. Candidates should have experience of a busy library loans work in a academic setting.
Salary on the scale UB5 1B £5,301 to £5,811, according to qualifications and experience.
Job cards, together with further particulars and application forms, should be sent to the Personnel Manager (Ref. J), The Open University, P.O. Box 76, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, telephone Milton Keynes 65884. Closing date for applications : April 8, 1977.

TRAVEL

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Exciting low fares for you in NEW YORK ! ZURICH ! ATHENS etc. ... Individually planned home ... exchanges throughout N. America/Europe—any destination. Details from :
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Dept. TLS, 8 Water Lane, London EC3Y 8NH
Tel: 01-626 9622

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Exciting low fares for you in NEW YORK ! ZURICH ! ATHENS etc. ... Individually planned home ... exchanges throughout N. America/Europe—any destination. Details from :
INTERNABANK Ltd
Dept. TLS, 8 Water Lane, London EC3Y 8NH
Tel: 01-626 9622

LIBRARIANS

LINEN HALL LIBRARY
17 Donegall Square North Belfast BT1 5GD
REFERENCE LIBRARIAN
£2,520-£3,282 (A.P. 2-3)
plus annual supplement of £312

Point of entry to be negotiated. Applicants are invited from suitably qualified Librarians for the above post. Closing date, 30th April, 1977. Further details may be obtained from the Librarian.

HIGHLAND HEALTH BOARD

Applications are invited from a qualified LIBRARIAN for appointment in the Highland Health Sciences Library at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness.
Salary is in the General Administrative Assistant Scale (£2,073 to £3,534 by seven annual incremental steps) plus £312 per annum. Superannuation with National Health Service conditions of service.
For further information and a form of application, please apply to the Personnel Officer, Highland Health Board, 17 Old Edinburgh Road, Inverness, to whom applications should be returned by 4th April 1977.

FROME COLLEGE, FROME

1 (A 13-18 Comprehensive School, 1,474 pupils, 157 in 6th Form and F.E. College, combined. Separate site.)
Required in April, or as soon as possible, a fully qualified LIBRARIAN (A.P. 2 : £3,234 to £3,594 inclusive) to take charge of the school library and assist in developing its role within the College.
Applications, giving details of salary by letter to the Principal, giving full details of age, experience and qualifications as soon as possible, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for further details.

LIBRARY ASSISTANT
LONDON W.C.1 AREA

We are a large, independent company in Bedford Square, which has its own comprehensive internal library. The library assistant will be responsible for all functions required to run the library, ensuring smooth-running and efficiency. These will include, in addition to senior staff duties, maintaining easily accessible files, ensuring all senior staff are in circulation with journals regularly and maintaining a display area of current information.
Candidates for this position should possess good powers of organisation, be capable of working on individual, conscientious approach to work.
We are offering a starting salary of around £2,500 per annum, 4 weeks holiday per year, luncheon vouchers, season ticket loan, pension scheme, flexible working hours are from 9.00 a.m. to 17.30 p.m. and a five day week.
Please write with full details about this interesting and responsible position, please telephone to write with details to :
Mrs. Jean Mc Neil, Computer Analysts & Programmers Limited, Bedford House, 21-27, Lamb's Conduit Street, London. Tel. : 01-242 0641.

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WORLD HISTORY catalogue issued on all areas, C. Hall, 10 Station Rd., Wickenden, Sussex.

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ANY AMERICAN BOOKS, new or out-of-print.—Write Orsay Books, RC-22 Eliot Avenue, Nego Park, New York, NY 11374.

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SPARKS & ARCHER buys and sells crime fiction. Large selection of second hand and esoteric books in the largest stock of modern literature in Europe. Open 10-5.30 Mon.-Sat. 01-549 2687 or write at 70 The Broadway, Ealing, London W5 2AP.

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STOP worrying about that elusive book ! We can get almost any title, out-of-print or new. Advise on condition and price of antiquarian books without obligation.—Arthur Ellis (Booksearch), 29 Hall Road, London NW8 9NE.

FINE printed books. Mr. Pickering, Bloomsbury Foundation, Little Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

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COLLECTORS items—offers invited for a number of Grose's Antiquities, 8 volumes of Grose's Military Antiquities, and Walter Scott Published by John Ballantyne, Edinburgh, 1814 and atlas of the English Counties, by Cary, engraver of the Turnpike Roads, 1787 Ordnance under the superintendence of Colonel Mudge, 1805. CAVENDISH MS. 21.—Antiquarian booksellers, 5 Cavendish Court, Wigmore Street, London, W.1. Tel. 01-580 2842.

BRITISH HISTORY.—Antiquarian subjects now ready. Bibliography 10-6. Mr. Ian Maxted, 27 Ridgmount Gardens, W.C.1. Tel. 01-636 1731.

DETECTIVE FICTION.—Rare and unusual literature catalogues from Anthony Burton, 11 Cotham Vale, Redland, Bristol, Avon.

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YOUT-OF-PRINT Railway books (small specialist) for sale (like 2 additional books) and Special Interest Topic, 20p for 1st class postage. Also NEW (worldwide) post etc. 45p for 1st class postage. Also additional books, 20p each. CREDIT CARD orders welcome (24hr) 01-741 0860. Subject requirements also welcome. Please send 20p for your FREE book and 45p for postage and request with membership card.
BIBLIAGORA
16 Rose St, Wokingham, Berks RG11 2LT

PUBLIC & UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF BATH
PROGRAMME OF CATALOGUE RESEARCH

APPLICATIONS are invited for the POSTS of RESEARCH OFFICER and ANALYST PROGRAMMER on the following projects financed by the British Library :
(1) A study into the content and sources of catalogue data for local libraries.
(2) An investigation of the present and future role of the University Library Catalogue.
The appointments are for three years, commencing as soon as possible. Salary on the scale UB5 1B £5,301 to £5,811, according to qualifications and experience.
Applications, comprising brief curriculum vitae and the names of two referees, should be sent to the Personnel Manager (Ref. J), The Open University, P.O. Box 76, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, telephone Milton Keynes 65884. Closing date for applications : April 8, 1977.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
THE LIBRARY

APPLICATIONS are invited from qualified GRADUATE LIBRARIANS for the following posts :
(1) ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN (Cataloguing) for the post of Assistant Librarian in charge of the Cataloguing Section. Applicants should have a knowledge of Oriental languages and scripts and experience of cataloguing in a large library. Salary scale £3,366-£3,702 per annum plus £312 per annum supplement.
(2) ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN (Reader Services) for the post of Assistant Librarian in charge of the Reader Services Section. Applicants should have a knowledge of Oriental languages and scripts and experience of reader services in a large library. Salary scale £3,366-£3,702 per annum plus £312 per annum supplement.
(3) ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN (Acquisitions) for the post of Assistant Librarian in charge of the Acquisitions Section. Applicants should have a knowledge of Oriental languages and scripts and experience of acquisitions in a large library. Salary scale £3,366-£3,702 per annum plus £312 per annum supplement.
(4) ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN (Serials) for the post of Assistant Librarian in charge of the Serials Section. Applicants should have a knowledge of Oriental languages and scripts and experience of serials in a large library. Salary scale £3,366-£3,702 per annum plus £312 per annum supplement.
Application forms and further details may be obtained from the Secretary, School of Oriental and African Studies, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HP. Closing date 20 April 1977.

LEICESTER POLYTECHNIC
LIBRARY

SUB-LIBRARIAN
(Technical Services)

Applications invited from suitably qualified and experienced librarians. The successful applicant will be required to organise the Technical Services Section of the Library, introducing an automated cataloguing system.
Salary scale £3,366 to £4,992 plus £312 supplement. Application forms and further particulars and application form available from the Librarian, The Polytechnic, Leicester PE1 9BH.

CITY OF LONDON POLYTECHNIC
LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES SERVICE
LIBRARY ASSISTANT

APPLICATIONS are invited for the POST OF LIBRARY ASSISTANT at the Poplar Technical Library. Applicants will be successful candidates for the Library Assistant post which will be advertised shortly. The duties will include issue and return of books, shelving and other routine Library work. An interest in social science subjects is desirable. Salary will be up to £3,282 per annum.
Application forms and further information may be obtained from the Librarian, Poplar Technical Library, 117-119 Poplar High Street, London E14 0AE. Tel. : 01-987 1141 Ext. 2.
Closing date is within two weeks of the appearance of this advertisement.

CITY OF LONDON POLYTECHNIC
LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES SERVICE
SERIALS LIBRARIAN
LSA LIBRARIAN GRADE 3
£3,684-£4,557

Applications are invited for the post of Serials Librarian. The successful candidate will be in charge of two assistants and will be responsible for the control of serials for the Polytechnic. Applicants should have a knowledge of serials work and be familiar with automated systems.
Application forms and further details may be obtained from the Librarian, Central Library, 117-119 Roupsgate, EC2A 1PB.
Closing date : two weeks from the appearance of this advertisement.

LONDON W.C.1
BIRKBECK COLLEGE
(University of London)
LIBRARY ASSISTANTS

Applications invited for two posts in the Library. Duties include issue and return of books in the Lending Library, shelving and other routine work. Salary £3,582 to £3,993 per annum inclusive of London Allowance. Application forms from the Librarian, Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX. Closing date 20 April 1977.

ASSISTANT CATALOGUER
£3,420 to £4,092 per annum
Applications are invited for the post of Assistant Librarian in charge of the Cataloguing Section of the Library of the Institute of Education and Bedford College. Applicants should have a degree and a knowledge of cataloguing and preferably some experience of cataloguing in a specialist library. Salary scale £3,366-£3,702 per annum plus £312 per annum supplement. Application forms and further particulars may be obtained from the Librarian, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL, to whom completed forms should be returned by 4th April, 1977.

COURSES

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
Courses of Advanced Study for Librarians
Session 1977-78

The following one-year courses will be offered in the Department of Librarianship, Bristol Polytechnic, and should be of interest to graduates, starting in October, 1977 :

Late Roman Studies
Modern European History
French Classical Drama and Literature
GERMAN
Theology
Philosophy
Religious Studies
Sociology
Applied Linguistics
Applied Social Studies and Social Work
Education
Librarianship
Applications should be made directly to the Department concerned.

CATALOGUES